

Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs

Rashīd Riḍā's Modernist Defense of Islam

The Criticisms of the Christians and the Proofs of Islam

Title Page and Preface

Sixteen articles published in the fourth and fifth volumes of the journal *al-Manār al-Islāmī* (The Islamic Lighthouse) in response to the book *Abḥāth al-Mujtahidīn* (Researches of the Mujtahids) and the periodicals *Bashā'ir al-Salām* (The Glad Tidings of Peace) and *al-Jāmi'ah*. Herein: demonstration of the meaning of the Torah and Gospel; comparison of Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad (God's blessing and peace be upon him); comparison of Islam with Christianity; demonstration of Christianity's character as a form of paganism; inquiry into the prophets' sinlessness, salvation, faith, works, and God's ways in creation; demonstration of Islam's character as the religion of reason and knowledge; inquiry into civil and religious authority, the shari'ah and the religion, and other topics.

By Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Founder of *al-Manār*, God, be He exalted, have mercy upon him.

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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

[*bā'*] Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! Thy Lord is best aware of him who strayeth from His way and He is Best Aware of those who go aright (*Sūrat al-Nahl*, [16:125]).

And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better, save with such of them as do wrong; and say: We believe in that which hath been revealed unto us and revealed unto you; our God and your God is One, and unto Him we surrender (*Sūrat al-'Ankabūt*, [29:46]).

Verily, the lifeblood of religions is mission (*da'wah*), and the power of truth is in truth itself, while the persistence of untruth occurs when the truth is neglectful of it. Truth is concealed when its people abandon it, while untruth is made manifest by its people gathering together upon it.

And never have truth and falsehood wrestled with one another but that truth is the victor and falsehood the defeated.

Nay, but We hurl the true against the false, and it doth break its head and lo! It vanisheth [21:18]; Then, as for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks, while, as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth. Thus Allah coineth the similitudes [13:17].

Islam appeared and wrestled with all the religions and threw them down. Its party fought all the sects and vanquished them. Its doctrines brought the people from the darkness to the light, while its precepts directed them towards the shade when they were in a hot wind. Thus did its truth overcome all falsehoods, the morning appearing by it and extinguishing every candle. But it was not long before its people forsook it, its party split into factions, the greedy strove against them, and the liars themselves dared to attack Islam. Thus did paganism assail divine oneness (*tawhīd*), blind imitation (*taqlīd*) exceed rational proof and the worshipers of the son of man argue against the worship of the Merciful (*al-Rahmān*).

Unto Him is the real prayer. Those unto whom they pray beside Allah respond to them not at all, save as (is the response) to one [*jīm*] who stretcheth forth his hands toward water (asking) that it may come unto his mouth, and it will never reach it. The prayer of the disbelievers goeth (far) astray [13:14].

Through weakening Islam, the Muslims themselves became weak. Hence the Europeans dominated them everywhere, and the missionaries of Christianity dispersed in the Islamic countries. They slandered the Qur'an and impugned the Prophet, prayer and peace be upon him.¹ I do

not fear from the missionaries that the Muslim will become a Christian. Rather, I fear that he will [be led to] doubt the fundamental essence of religion and become a libertine. Yet, however much the winds of paganism sway him, he would not ascribe divinity to other than God, as do the Christians.² "And unto Allah falleth prostrate whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, as do their shadows in the morning and the evening hours" [13:15].

These missionaries attacked the Muslims where they were weak, hitting them where they were most vulnerable. They knew that they had abandoned the Qur'an – an ugly abandonment³ – and dispensed with it through idle talk in the books of the modern thinkers. Then they began searching for the ambiguous verses (*mutashābihāt*) in the Qur'an,⁴ portraying their harmony as disharmony and representing their consistency to the people as inconsistency. And what does the feeble traditionalist do when it is said to him, "these statements are those of the dead ulama of your legal school"? Is it not frightening that, due to his ignorance, they land him in a state of shock? "Verily they have plotted their plot, and their plot is with Allah, though their plot were one whereby the mountains should be moved" [14:46].

These zealots did not stop at attacking [Islam] in books, newspapers, and religious periodicals. They even spat out the poison of their hostility in the political and academic newspapers, one alleging that Islam is the enemy of reason and religion, and another claiming that its politics harms all people. You were indeed excessive, O shooters of arrows, so much so that arrowheads broke against arrowheads. "Alike of you is he who hideth the saying and he who noiseth it abroad, he who lurketh in the night and he who goeth in the daytime" [13:10].

The sleep of the Muslims gulled you, but behold them now, there they

are, starting to awake. And perhaps the one who awakes them harms himself through that which they turn to their own advantage, since he induces them to become concerned to understand the Noble Qur'an and hold fast to its strong rope. And when they hold fast they stand erect, and when they stand erect they prevail.⁵

Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts; and if Allah willeth misfortune for a folk there is none that can repel it, nor have they any defender beside Him [13:11].

[*dāl*] We were making fun of what the Christian missionaries wrote attacking Islam, as we saw the Muslims paying it no attention. We had not been doing that for long before we were asked about some of their criticisms by someone familiar with their writings. He asked that we, in keeping with the requirement of the shari'ah, reply to them. According to the shari'ah we were duty-bound to respond in equal measure. Hence we responded in a civil tone, promising that we would go no further than replying to the criticisms of the critics, defending without attacking.⁶

However, the people started sending to us what they wrote, and the Muslims demanded of us that we respond. We continued clashing with them and debating with them by that which is better, combining refutation of untruth with clarification of truth. [This continued] until we placed that open section in our periodical *al-Manār al-Islāmī* (The Islamic Lighthouse), entitled *Shubuhāt al-Naṣārā wa Hujaj al-Islām* (The Criticisms of the Christians and the Proofs of Islam). The title signifies that the Christian religion itself does not criticize the Islamic religion, rather the Christians themselves criticize it, and that the right arguments against them are not those of those Muslims who have become an argument against their religion, but rather those of the religion of Islam itself.

Then, some earnest people suggested that we gather together the articles from this section of *al-Manār* and publish them in a separate

book, so that they might be more easily read and studied, as needed. So we did, and here we are publishing the book in small parts, increasing its utility and as an invitation to the lazy. We will publish every four parts in a separate volume, trusting in God.

He it is Who showeth you the lightning, a fear and a hope, and raiseth the heavy clouds [13:12]; The Thunder hymneth His praise and (so do) the angels for awe of Him. He launcheth the thunderbolts and smiteth with them who He will while they dispute (in doubt) concerning Allah, and He is mighty in wrath [13:13].

Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā

Editor and publisher of *al-Manār*

Article One: On the Need to Respond and Clarify the Muslim View of the Torah and Gospel

[1] We have come upon a major paper written by one of those busy reading the books that the Christian missions published attacking Islam. In it, the writer asks for clarification regarding doubts that remained in his mind after reading those books. It is imperative that we address these doubts, because the defense of the religion of Islam is the most important task for which *al-Manār* was established. Yet our practice, that we have followed from the first day, concerns the matter of those who oppose us in religion, especially the Christians, and more than that, the endeavor to eliminate resentments and come to an agreement on what the success of the country entails. We desire that no one slanders the religion of the other, neither through speech nor writing. But the Christians do not agree with us about this, as do the Muslims. Hence, we see them making gatherings in order to hurt Islam verbally, publishing newspapers, such as *The Standard of Zion* (*Rāyah Ṣahyūn*), and writing books to attack its scripture. Truly, we bear this hostile action patiently and refrain from going further than addressing the doubts of the questioners among the people of our own religion, taking courtesy into account. Thus, we say:

Truly, we were astonished by this Muslim reader of the Christian books, by his being satisfied with reading them without reading the

Islamic books that confront them with their equivalent, repel their criticisms, and oppose against them that which cannot be repelled, such as *Demonstration of the Truth* (*Izhār al-Ḥaqq*),⁷ *The Polished Sword* (*al-Sayf al-Ṣaḡīl*)⁸ and other such books. Our first response to the reader is that it is incumbent upon him to read those Islamic books and, after reading

them and comparing them with the Christian books, to read and ask about what remains unclear to him. If his doubts remain, it is because the newspaper in which he wanted us to publish the answers to his questions is not, in treating the debate about the topics it addresses, sufficient for this purpose: it does not include everything that needs to be included. This is because the elimination of all of his doubts would require slander, something that our newspaper avoids, in contrast to what we read at the end of his paper.

[2] The questioner's criticisms are divided into three sections. First, contradictions between some Islamic texts and the scriptures of the Christians and the Jews. Second, the appearance of things in the Qur'an not mentioned in those books. If you are amazed by this, it is because the doubt of this Muslim is indeed amazing in the following way: silence about something is not the same as denial of its existence. How, then, can he entertain doubts about that which he believes God made clear, simply because these historians did not mention it! Third, the appearance of things in the Qur'an and hadith contradicting reality or what is established in the modern sciences by means of the claim of those from whom he got his ideas.

We respond here to the first and third criticisms. As to the second, our opinion is what we have said already, that is, there is no reason for any doubt concerning it. We begin our response with a brief discussion concerning Muslim beliefs about the Torah and Gospel. We say:

The questioner argues for the fact that the Torah and Gospel originate with God on the basis of the Qur'an. This in accordance with the wishes of the Christian missionaries whose books and words he is fond of. And I swear, by my life, there is no evidence in support of that argument except for the testimony of the Qur'an. This is because the testimony of the Qur'an is a proof that God Almighty enacted a law upon the tongue of Moses and named it the Torah. Now, this testimony is an argument against the Qur'an's veracity, because it testifies to the truthfulness of something that wisdom, knowledge and existence deem false, and moreover, something that testifies to its own falseness. As for the Torah's testimony to its own falseness, it is in what it contains in the way of inconsistency and

self-contradiction. As for the testimony of reason, knowledge and existence, it contradicts those books that, in the view of the people, are named Torah. If the questioner needs to confirm this in detail, let him consult what is written about it in the *Great French Encyclopedia*, other books written by European scholars, and those of the Muslims, such as *Demonstration of the Truth* (*Izhār al-Ḥaqq*).⁹

As for the response to this doubt, which demonstrates the veracity of the Qur'anic testimony, it is as follows. The Torah for which the Qur'an testifies is a book of law and precepts, not a book of history borrowed from the mythology of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and others.¹⁰ Thus, we note the sciences of geology and archeology disproving it, or the conformity of this with some of what is related in it. Neither is it natural history. Thus, we note what has been established by experience disproving it. An example is the surety that the snake does not eat [3] earth, although it is related in the book of Genesis that the Lord said to the snake, "and dust you shall eat all the days of your life" [Gn 3:14].¹¹ This is to say nothing of its

ascription of unbefitting characteristics to God, such as His feeling of regret for creating mankind and so forth. Thus, the Torah is authentic. It is the laws and percepts that Moses, those who succeeded him among the Israelites' prophets (peace be upon them), and their rabbis, judged by. As God Almighty said: "Lo! We did reveal the Torah wherein is guidance and a light, by which the prophets who surrendered (unto Allah) judged the Jews and the rabbis and the priests (judged)" [5:44]. The Qur'an did not corroborate the numerous historical books, including those whose author and compiler was not known, and all of which were written long after Moses, author of the Torah. With this answer, the Qur'anic testimony is upheld, while the doubter's doubts about the historical difference between the Qur'an and the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others are rendered baseless, because the Qur'an does not corroborate these books.

Do not be fooled by people naming all the books of the Old Testament "Torah," as that usage is generalization. Moreover, we see the Christians

in Arabic, thereby influencing the intellectual development of Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Jisr (1845–1909), Riḍā's early mentor (see Chapter Two). Van Dyke's translation had its origins in Beirut, where the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions appointed Smith to produce a new translation from the original Biblical languages (the earliest known Arabic Bible is dated 867). Smith completed most of the work, including all of the New Testament, before his death in 1857. Van Dyke was then hired to complete the project. Issa Saliba notes that Van Dyke effectively re-translated Smith's translation of the New Testament. He consciously avoided Qur'anic language, in keeping with the wishes of local Christians, but against the advice of his missionary colleagues. This decision has been reversed in more recent translations. Ford, 245. Hourani, 222–223. Riḍā, *Al-Manār wa al-Azhar* (Cairo: 1934–35), 142. Issa Saliba, "The Bible in Arabic: The 19th-Century Protestant Translation," *Muslim World* 65 (1975): 259–261. For sources on the history of Arabic Bible translation, see Ford, 367.

The translation has a reputation for being of poor quality, particularly in its use of an overly colloquial or near-colloquial style. This is significant, as both Riḍā and his Arabic-speaking opponents considerably depended on it for their interpretation of Christian doctrine. Comparison of the passages Riḍā cites with reputable English translations including the *The Jerusalem Bible* and the *New Revised Standard Version* reveals differences.

frequently naming the collected books of the two testaments, Old and New, "Torah" when they are combined.

As for the Gospel, in Muslim belief it consists of the warnings, wisdom, and precepts that God Almighty revealed to Christ, may prayer and peace be upon him, and with which he exhorted and taught the people. In the Muslim view, what exceeds that in the books that they name "gospels," is historical if a report, and that of the one who said it, if a precept or doctrine. You know that the Christians name the collected books of the New Testament "Gospel," and acknowledge that they were written after Christ at different times. Like the books of the Old Testament, these books lack the chains of transmission that the Christians adduce as evidence to vindicate them.¹²

The Qur'an testifies against the Christians that they did not preserve all of the revelation named "Gospel" with which Christ exhorted them when it states: "And with those who say: 'Lo! we are Christians,' We made a covenant, but they forgot a part of that whereof they were admonished" [5:14]. The Qur'an says likewise with regard to the Jews. The expression "the Gospel" can be applied to a portion of that revelation in the same way that the word "al-Qur'an" or "Qur'an" is applied to a portion of it. One says "so-and-so was reading [4] the Qur'an," and this usage is even attested in the Qur'an and hadith, and the Qur'an was called "Qur'an" before it was completely revealed.

Since the Torah's precepts and the Gospel's maxims were in the possession of the Jews and the Christians, the Qur'an was without doubt remonstrating them for not establishing them. Their mixing of them with historical material does not counter this remonstrance. Rather, it is the reason for the Prophet's statement, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, "Neither believe nor disbelieve them," namely, when they present you with something from their scriptures.¹³ This is because we do not have a criterion for distinguishing the originally revealed precepts from what was

added in the process of composition. Yes, in keeping with our understanding, we think it probable that all, or most, of the rulings attributed to Moses in the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Leviticus are from Torah, because if they are not the Torah, then where is it? Similarly, we find more validity in Christ's "Sermon on the Mount," as in the chronicle "The Gospel of Matthew," and other sermons, as some of the European and Eastern scholars think it probable that a major portion of the true Gospel was included in the book of Isaiah. As for the reports that the people possess, we aver that whatever in them differs from the Qur'an is false, and no wonder, since God speaks truthfully, whereas historians lie. This is the meaning of the Almighty's statement: "And unto thee have We revealed the Scripture with the truth, confirming whatever Scripture was before it, and a watcher over it" [5:48]. This suffices for now, our appointment being the coming installment. If doubts about what we have written remain for the questioner, let him write to us for further explanation. We would prefer that he visit us at the offices of *al-Manār* to receive a verbal answer, as the freedom of the tongue is greater than that of the pen. And were it not that our jurists charge with unbelief one who knows that a Muslim doubts his religion, and has the ability to remove his doubt yet does not do so, we would not have written what we wrote. This is because we are preachers of harmony and agreement, and petitioners of friendship and union. But our religion imposes this in particular upon us, even though the questioner concealed his name and sought that he be answered in *al-Manār*. Thus, that was imposed upon us.¹⁴

Article Two: Historical Doubts about Judaism and Christianity; Comparison of the Three Prophets

[5] We wrote a brief paper with the same title as this, namely *The Criticisms of the Christians et cetera* in the fifth part,¹⁵ mentioning in its introduction that we are petitioners of friendship and harmony, not agents of conflict and opposition, and that we do not wish that

anyone among the Muslims and the Christians defames the religion of the other. This is due to our belief that, for each faction, demonstration of the good qualities of its religion suffices for the call to it, without need for defamation. Indeed, Islam implemented this principle, growing dramatically and spreading rapidly, the like of which knows no equal in history. We also mentioned that if our Muslim brothers agree with us about the agreeability of this approach, the Christians do not, because they compose books, write letters, and publish newspapers to defame our religion, sending them to us for a reply.

One of the men of letters and scholars of their religion, Niqūlā Afandī Ghibriyāl, composed a new book calling for conversion to Christianity and challenging Islam.¹⁶ This book is distinguished from others in its objectivity and lack of profanity. He presented it to us as a gift so that we might discuss it at *al-Manār*. Then, he came to meet us, asking that we publish our opinion of it, even if it should disprove his ideas. We also met one of the missionary colleagues of the author who beseeched us to write, emphasizing the necessity of our so doing. There is no doubt that debate is the occupation of those who live by it. As the seller seeks a buyer, the debater seeks another debater. But the petition for a reply to the book was not restricted to these individuals. Some of the newspaper editors among the Christians even requested this of us, such as his excellency Ṣāhib al-Saʿadah Salīm Bāshir al-Ḥamawī, who did so both verbally and in writing, in his honorable newspaper *al-Falāḥ*. There is no doubt that were we to respond to these authors measure for measure, we would move beyond the boundaries of defense into assault, such that they would see our hand span as a cubit and our cubit as a fathom. For if the religion of innate disposition is not established, [6] no religion may be established. And had the Muslims not concealed Islam from view, all wise Europeans would have accepted it.

That is clear to anyone who examines the three religions in terms of their holy books, in knowledge of the histories and biographies of those who brought them. We had a conversation with one of the scholars of

history among the “geographical Christians,” those who are not fanatical with regard to the truth of religion. The subject of the debate was, “Who is the greatest man of history?” and we imposed upon ourselves the proviso that we were not “believers” in religion. I mentioned Muḥammad, while he mentioned Moses and Jesus, may prayer and peace be upon them all. We agreed that they were the greatest of men, but disagreed as to which was greatest and most honored in terms of condition and historical influence.

I said: Moses was raised in the house of the greatest king in the world at that time, as if he was his son. Thus, he grew up in the bosom of royalty and power, was saturated with love of power and rule, witnessed the civilized way of life and the universal and magical sciences, and saw the arts of industry. He was raised in the shadow of positive and religious law, while the pride of monarchy made manifest that which shaped his temper in the way of courage and initiative. Then, when he came of age and became an enemy and an affliction to the Pharaoh and his family, he knew that he had at his disposal an oppressed and disgraced nation, in spite of what it had been granted in the way of natural intelligence, seriousness in work, and multiple offspring. Hence, he took it as his partisan support, and endeavored to establish a kingdom that his soul desired due to the royal upbringing he had received. And he opposed and fought Pharaoh, first using the power with which Pharaoh had captured souls and with whose authority he had enslaved the peoples. It is the power of the strange works in whose lap he was raised. Then, he rebelled against him using the strength of partisan support, the like of which may be seen among many peoples in many kingdoms. History informs us that among the rebels there may be one who establishes an emirate or kingdom inside the kingdom against whose authority he had rebelled. Yet Moses went out from Egypt fleeing from Pharaoh with his people. As for the crossing of the sea, the strange work that cannot be a trick, nor *legerdemain*, magic, or skill, some of the historians explained that Israelites crossed the sea at the end of the tide’s ebb at a point of shallow depth. And when the Pharaoh crossed the sea with the Egyptians, the waters of the tide had begun to rise and flood, so they drowned. The like of this happened to Napoleon Bonaparte [7] as he

crossed to the far shore of the Red Sea at the time of the tide's ebb. When he needed to return to the shore of Egypt, the water had begun to rise. Had he not commanded his soldiers to grasp hold of each other until the strength of the group overpowered the strength of the rising water, they would all have drowned. What exceeds this in the strange works of Moses: in its transmission are dubiousities; in its comprehension are doubts; in its evidence for his demonstration thereof and his speaking on God Almighty's behalf is speculation. If some in the past accepted it, is not possible that those today accept it. Of the law that he brought, history testifies that the greater part conforms with the Egyptians' laws. What exceeds that is not more than that of one raised with his upbringing, and granted the like of his disposition's intelligence.

As for Jesus, he was a Jewish man raised under the Mosaic Law. He judged according to the Roman codes and was acquainted with Greek philosophy. Thus, he knew the civilizations of three nations, the greatest civilizations among the nations of the earth and the most advanced in science and precept. He was not induced by any of this to legislate a new shari'ah, nor to establish a nation. Rather, he was a well-spoken teacher. His mind was penetrated by some excesses of certain Greek philosophers concerning renunciation, forsaking worldly life altogether, and humiliating the soul for the spirit's salvation and entry into the kingdoms of heaven. Thus, he began preaching this enthusiastically, and some of the poor followed him, finding consolation and solace in his message. They began enthusiastically reporting some of his miracles, as is well-known of common folk. Indeed, what is reported about him is less than a tenth of a tenth of what is reported about anyone of the Muslims' Sufi saints (*awliyā'*), such as al-Jīlī and al-Badawī.¹⁷ As for his being born without a father, this is

a claim that cannot be proven except by the religion of Islam's proof, by rational proof, not by miracles. But this is not our topic here. Hence the historian, if he thinks well, would state that Jesus is the son of Joseph the carpenter, husband of Mary. This marriage is not denied by Christians.¹⁸

Moses, then, had a great influence, but for Jesus history does not recognize an influence worthy of mention in science, social reform, or civilization. Indeed, on the contrary, his teachings and exhortations lead to the spoliation of civilization, the destruction of culture, and the decline of humankind from its highest horizon to the lowest depth of animal existence. This is due to what they contain teaching the raising of souls in humiliation [8] and baseness, assent to abasement and oppression, and the command to forsake the flourishing and upgrading of life in the belief that the camel enters the eye of the needle, whereas the rich man does not enter the kingdoms of heaven. Furthermore, from a second angle, these are libertine teachings, because they teach that one who believes in the

Al-Jīlī also sets the precedent for the Sufi master as a paradigm of spiritual guidance living among the believers, which grew in importance after the demise of the caliphate in 1258. As Sufi master, al-Jīlī became part of a hierarchy at the top of which he stood as the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) who was the "pole" (*qutb*) around which the world revolved. Hence, while the master himself propagated sober Sufism, Riḍā's comment refers to the al-Jīlī of legend, in whom the miraculous nature of the divine is manifest. He walks on water, floats through the air; angels, jinn and even Muḥammad appear, to express their appreciation for him. As W. Braume notes, "nothing is impossible for him" as he is "the concrete presence of the Divine." For Riḍā, such miraculous stories are to be treated with caution, while those told of Jesus, simply as such, do not corroborate Christian claims about his nature and are clearly not unique. Al-Jīlī is also believed to play a mediating role between the worshipper and the divine, another Christian-like notion of which Riḍā himself would be unlikely to approve.

Similar beliefs are popularly held about the miraculous powers of Sayyid Aḥmad al-Badawī (1199/ 1200–1276), founder of the Badawīyyah order. Sīdī Aḥmad, as he is popularly known, is also called the "pole" and is probably the most popular Sufi saint in Egypt. W. Braume, "Abd al-Qādir al-Djīlānī," in *El-Frederick Denny, An Introduction to Islam* 247–252.

crucifixion of Christ for the sake of his salvation is favored with the kingdoms of heaven, and has all of his sins erased. One who believed this would deem every taboo violate, following his desire.¹⁹ From a third angle, we see that these are pagan teachings, because they command worshipping the human, extinguishing the light of the mind by commanding it to believe in the certainty of something of whose impossibility it is absolutely certain, namely three being one, and one being three. And it banishes the independence of thought and will when forcing them to be chained to the authority of the church leaders according to the following teaching: "whatever you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven."²⁰

As for the claim that European civilization is Christian, it is a claim destroyed by the rudiments of thought because this is a materialistic civilization built upon love of money, power, overpowering others, glory, majesty, exaltedness and the savoring of passions, all of which is completely contradicted by Christian teaching. Also, the Europeans did not achieve what they achieved until they discarded the Christian teachings altogether. Were this civilization derived from the influence of Christian teaching, it would have ensued from it at a time close to its formation. However, it did not appear until some centuries after its appearance. The upshot is that history does not recognize for Christ an influence granting him the standing of the lawgivers and reformers of nations.

As for Muḥammad, prayer and peace be upon him, he was raised as an orphan in a nation of paganism, illiteracy, and ignorance, one lacking religious or positive law, civilization, national unity, and industry. The highest station it attained in his time was that some individuals learned to write, due to their dealings with other nations. He was not among them, nor were those who first followed him in faith. In spite of this, he founded a nation, religion, shari'ah, kingdom and civilization in a short period, the like of which knows no equivalent in history.

He taught humanity to build its doctrines on the foundations of rational proofs, to set its cultures and dispositions on the path of moderation, to safeguard the rights of the spirit and the body, and to [9] observe the ways of God in creation and with nations. He explained the acts of worship to them in terms of their influences in purifying and cleansing the spirit, such as the salat (*ṣalāh*) preventing lewdness and the forbidden through what was stipulated in it in the way of humility *et cetera*.²¹ He made good things lawful for them, forbade them abominable actions, and rendered worldly transactions focused upon the safeguarding of human welfare and the procurement of benefit. He liberated the freedom of mind and thought for them, and equalized rights among them, there being no distinction between the great king and the poor pauper, or between man and woman. He gave the woman freedom of control over her properties, set down just limits for men's control over women and for slavery, refined a system of warfare, prohibiting outrage, mutilation of those killed in battle, and the killing of non-combatants such as women, elderly men, children, and men of religion *et cetera*, as I mentioned to that historian investigator. I will elaborate the teaching about it in the coming lessons on divine oneness, if God wills.

That honored man conceded to me that Muḥammad, the best prayer and peace be upon him, is the greatest man of history, except he argued against me in terms of the Muslims' sorry condition contrasting with what had I said in my description of the religion of Islam. So I said to him: "Truly there is between Islam and the Muslims a difference like that between Christianity and the Christians or greater." Suffice to say that Islamic civilization did not exist other than through the religion of Islam (see the articles on the civilization of the Arabs in *al-Manār* volume three), receding from them whenever they innovated in the religion and strayed from its straight path, until they arrived at their present condition.²² As for the European civilization that some people term Christian, it did not exist until the people of Europe came into contact with the

Muslims, taking their books and translating them, and they continued advancing in their civilization as they distanced themselves from Christianity.²³ He said, "this is exaggeration on both points," and the meeting ended.

It remains that the abovementioned criticisms of the prophecies of Moses and Jesus, prayer and peace be upon them both, extend to the prophecy of Muḥammad, God Almighty's blessing and peace be upon him. This is not because his religion can be rejected in the same way that what is known of their religions can be rejected. Rather, it is because he corroborated their prophecy and divine guidance. The reply is found in the summary (*The Criticisms of the Christians against Islam*) published in this year's fifth part.²⁴ Were [10] the men of religion among the Jews and Christians just, they would hold fast to this answer and agree with it, because it alone rebuts for them the objections of the scholars of history, archeology, geology, natural history, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology. As for the reply concerning the miraculous sign of Moses' parting of the waters, it is that what some historians mentioned concerning the rise and ebb of the tide is a possibility that is outweighed by the reports of revelation established by actual proof, as we explained in the lesson on divine oneness previous to this article.²⁵ The same may be said with regard to all of the miraculous signs and the criticisms leveled against them. We shall complete the response about what we mentioned about the historical objections to the teachings attributed to Christ.

To summarize what we are saying here: religion's affirmation is either effected through the reporting of supernatural phenomena beyond the

people's ken. The theory of this was given in the lesson on divine oneness, and it is also shared by all, because every nation reports about its lawgiver in that manner. Thus, what is said about the reporting of one may be said about the reporting of others. However, the reporting of the Muslims is closer to the truth than that of others for many reasons. Among them: that knowledge, composition, and oral narration have been known to them from the first century until the present day. Among them: that they were not conquered by an enemy who burned their books and destroyed the things that instill confidence in their religion and history. Among them: that they were not oppressed and forced to conceal their religion, as it is said that corruption occurs when religion is concealed. Among them: that they invented the science of biography for determining the soundness or unsoundness of a narration. The Jews and Christians lacked such advantages.

Or, religion's affirmation is effected through signs inside the self and knowledge-related signs. And this is not manifest in a prophet as manifest in connection to our prophet, God's blessing and peace be upon him, as we explained in the lesson on divine oneness published in this part. We shall elaborate our explanation in what is forthcoming, as we promised. Then, the sound proof for the prophecy of Moses and Jesus, peace be upon them, in this time is our prophet's testimony for them. God Almighty granted them miraculous signs appropriate to the conditions of the nations during their lifetimes. It is not possible that they be self-affirming now. Hence, we see whoever is educated and rational among those affiliated with Moses and Jesus discarding them completely, deeming them fabricated. Had such an individual known Islam truly, he would have accepted it, and accepted them from the perspective of rationality.

Therefore, the best service to ultimate religion is that Islam be known truly, so that Judaism and Christianity also be known [11] in an acceptable manner. That is achieved by reconciling the Torah and Gospel with the Qur'an, as we so reconciled in the fifth part. It is not achieved by seeking Qur'anic evidence for the veracity of the Torah and Gospel, and then seeking evidence from what they name "the Torah" – consisting of those numerous books, most of which were composed after the author of the

Torah – and the numerous collected books and letters they name “Gospel,” for the falsehood of the Qur’an. This is because such action returns the subject to logical incompatibility, so that the evidence refutes itself. The least of what may be said on this is: “They fought with each other, both falling down.” The result is the invalidation of all scriptures, namely, saying that the Qur’an constitutes evidence for the veracity of the Torah and Gospel, when, according to their claim, the Qur’an is not from God. Thus, its testimony is false and its evidence unsound. We shall return to debating the book *Researches of the Mujtahids* and the newspaper *The Glad Tidings of Peace*, uniting the religions and calling for the elimination of rancor (p. 379. vol. 4).

Article Three: Comparison between Islam and Christianity in Terms of the Three Goals of Religion

[11] In the fifth and tenth parts, we explained the Muslim view of what is intended by the “Torah and Gospel” for which the Noble Qur’an testifies.²⁶ We explained that, for the Christians, no proof arises for the establishment of their religion and scripture, and the prophecy of Moses and Jesus, may peace be upon them, except that of the Qur’an. The Qur’an cannot be a proof unless it is from God Almighty. Hence, it is incumbent upon them to believe in it, embrace its reform and become, like us, upholders of divine oneness. We worship Him and Him alone, not any human being, such as Christ or anyone else. We call all pagans to this faith – which represents the highest station in the elevation of human reason and in which is prosperity and salvation in the hereafter – together with the good acts that it mandates. In the lesson on divine oneness published in the previous part, we established the prophecy of our prophet, may prayer and peace be upon him, with rational evidence and that what he brought was revelation.²⁷ We shall elaborate on this explanation in the coming lessons, God Almighty willing.

These evangelists [12] invite us to investigate into religion. Or, they invite us to believe – it being a “matter of faith” – that one of the prophets

is fully divine and fully human, and that one is truly three and three truly one, notwithstanding that reason declares this impossible. They invite us to reject one of the prophets, and to deny his prophecy completely, notwithstanding that it is supported by the strongest rational proofs. If, then, they seek to manifest the truth so as to follow it, they are making reason the foundation and appointing it the fundamental judge in weighing evidence. Otherwise, how are truth and falsehood to be distinguished? If they say, “by way of the books of religion,” we say, first, “by what criteria are these books to be verified?” If they say, “by way of reason,” we say, “you are forced, then, to appoint reason as fundamental judge,” and it is not feasible that reason would assert the veracity of a book containing something that it deems impossible. Second, if the books of religion that you compare are in agreement, then religion is one. Otherwise, by what means are some to be preferred over others? Is it not reason that clarifies which of them are most guiding and life-giving in terms of what humankind seeks in religion?

Religion has three objectives: confirmation of the beliefs through which reason may be perfected, cultivation of the morals that perfect the soul, and the perfection of acts upon which welfare and benefit depend and that perfect the body. Were we to appoint as arbitrator a rational individual who had not previously followed the religious tradition of the Muslims or Christians, and empower him to demonstrate, on the basis of pure reason, which of the two religions truly exhausted these three objectives, on what basis would he make his determination?

He would see the Muslims agreeing on the stipulation that their doctrines’ proof must be certain, as their scripture states with regard to supposition that lacks the degree of certainty: “Assuredly conjecture can by no means take the place of truth” [10:36; 53:28]. It states with regard to those who use the will of God Almighty as an excuse for their polytheism: “Have ye any knowledge that ye can adduce for us? Lo! ye follow naught but an opinion, Lo! ye do but guess” [6:148]; “Say: Bring your proof, if ye are truthful!” [27:64].²⁸ When mentioning the signs that it established as the

basis of belief, it states: "Lo! herein indeed are portents for folk who understand [30:24]; Lo! herein verily are portents for men of thought [20:54]" – that is, those who have minds.

He would see the Christians agreeing that their belief is above reason, that reason decrees it impossible and unprovable.²⁹ There is no [13] doubt that he would determine that the Muslims' doctrines are the true truth, and would not deem worthy of consideration the statement of the author of *Researches of the Mujtahids* and others of his ilk: "That constitutes an investigation into the nature of the essence of God Almighty, whereas no one knows the nature of God save God, as Muslims and others agree." The reason is that there is a great difference between what reason proves with evidence – without knowing its deepest essence – and what it repudiates and declares unrealizable. An example of this is found in our furnishing of evidence for matter through its attributes, characteristics, and effects. And while we do not doubt its existence, we do not know the true nature of its essence. Moreover, reason does not attain knowledge of the true nature of any of the created things, but rather comprehends external appearances and attributes. But then the Torah describes God Almighty with attributes that reason rejects, such as the Lord's statement in the sixth chapter of the Book of Genesis: "And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created'" [Gn 6:6–7]. This indicates that He was ignorant and incapable, Exalted be He over such things.

Then, this rational individual and just judge examines the second objective, namely, cultivation of morals. He would see that the Islamic teachings concerning it stand upon the foundations of justice and moderation, without exaggeration or excess, together with preference for

forbidden aught. Thus did those who were before them give the lie (to Allah's messengers) till they tasted of the fear of Us. Say: Have ye any knowledge that ye can adduce for us? Lo! ye follow naught but an opinion, Lo! ye do but guess" (6:148).

pardon, forgiveness and charity, in accordance with their Book: "Lo! Allah enjoineeth justice and kindness and giving to kinsfolk, and forbiddeth lewdness and abomination and wickedness. He exhorteth you in order that you may take heed" [16:90]. Al-Bayḍāwī interprets lewdness as excess with regard to the strength of animal desire, and abomination as excess with regard to the strength of untamed anger.³⁰

Deal justly, that is nearer to piety [5:8].³¹

And forget not kindness among yourselves [2:238].

And those who, when they spend, are neither prodigal nor grudging; and there is ever a firm station between the two [25:67].

– and the like, numerous verses, general and specific. He would see that the Christian teachings are built upon exaggeration and excess. Their scripture states: "Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you," as in the gospel of Matthew 5:44. This is exaggeration in love, something of which humans are incapable, as it is beyond their control. In the Gospel of Luke 19:27: "As for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them – bring them here and slaughter them in my presence."³² In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 14:25: "and he said to them, 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate [14] his father and mother, wife and children, brothers, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.'" This exaggeration in love is excess in enmity and hatred, and its like is abundant. There is no doubt that this rational individual would adjudge the religion of moderation superior to the religion of exaggeration and excess. This is because the former elevates and strengthens human souls, as the Almighty states: "might belongeth to Allah and to His messenger,

and the believers" [63:8]. The latter, on the other hand, lowers and debases them, as it states: "whoever strikes you on the right cheek, offer him the left," and the like with the same meaning.³³

As for the third objective, the good acts that elevate the human species spiritually and bodily, the rational individual would see that in Islam each act of worship among these acts is joined to its benefit, such as the salat (*ṣalāh*) preventing lewdness and what is forbidden, the fast elevating piety, and worship in general being the good pleasure of God Almighty, as per His statement "seeking My good pleasure [60:1]," and other examples of acts that purify the soul and elevate the spirit.³⁴ He would not see the like of this in the others' scriptures. Rather, he would see in the Torah – which is the book of Christian precepts that Christians profess to believe, but do not do so in reality – that the precepts of worship are related to worldly benefit: as in chapter four of the book of Deuteronomy: "Keep his statutes . . . which I am commanding you today for your own well-being and that of your descendants after you" [Deut 4:40], and as in explaining the festivals' legitimacy through reference to harvest time, cultivation of land, and the exodus from Egypt, in chapter twenty-three of the Book of Exodus, verses fourteen through sixteen. What is this compared with the explanation of the wisdom of the feast of breaking the Ramadan fast (*ʿĪd al-Fiṭr*) in the Almighty's statement: "and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful" [2:185]?

The rational individual would see that the Islamic precepts for worldly transactions are based upon the foundation of the maxim "preventing corruption and attaining the good," as Muslims agree, and that the general principles of these precepts are five, known as "the five general principles," namely, the protection of the religion, life, family honor, the mind, and property.³⁵ He would see that the Islamic shari'ah grants equal rights to those who follow it and those who do not and commands the

uncovering of the universe's secrets and extraction of its benefits, as per the Almighty's statement: "And hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; it is all from Him" [45:13]. He would see that the Torah and Gospel's precepts did not [15] combine these benefits. Rather, they frequently opposed them. Thus the ninth commandment states, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" [Ex 20:16].³⁶ What is this limitation to the neighbor compared to the Qur'an's commandment in the following and other such verses?

O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer to both (than ye are). So follow not passion lest ye lapse (from truth) and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever Informed of what ye do [4:135].

In chapter fourteen of the book of Deuteronomy, alcohol and other lusts are authorized unrestrictedly: "spend the money for whatever you wish – oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, or whatever you desire. And you shall eat there in the presence of the Lord . . . you and your household rejoicing together" [Deut 14:26]. In chapter six of the gospel of Matthew: "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear" [Mt 6:25]. On another matter: "Do not be uneasy for the sake of the bread which is denied."³⁷ It commands them thus notwithstanding that they considered bread their lifeblood. They were even commanded to seek it in their prayers, in his statement "Give us this day our daily bread" [Lk 11:3].³⁸ Then, what is this contradiction?

These books not only command the abandonment of acts performed for the sake of worldly life, but moreover, state that wholesome acts performed in it are of no value or benefit whatsoever. Hence, Paul states in his letter to the Romans: "Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts

him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness" [Rom 4:4–5]. This, whereas God states in the Qur'an:

But righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scriptures and the Prophets; and giveth his wealth for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress [2:177].

Then, will nations achieve success through these acts or through a faith that attributes no value to acts performed in its fulfillment?

Paul affirms this idea in chapter three of his letter to the Galatians when mentioning that the acts of God's Law are cursed, that in God's view no one is justified by the Law, and that [16] there is no need for it after Christ's coming.³⁹ Christ himself, however, states, "I did not come to abolish the Law, rather I came to complete it."⁴⁰ However, Christians act in accordance with Paul's doctrine, relinquishing the Torah and its precepts altogether. The messengers permitted them all prohibited things, except fornication, shed blood, what has been strangled, and what has been sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:28–29). It is as if they saw that the Torah's shari'ah was not suitable for humankind. Take for example, Ezekiel chapter twenty, which states that when He became angry with the Israelites, the Lord said:

(23) Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, (24) because they had not executed my ordinances, but had rejected my statutes and

profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their ancestors' idols.

(25) Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live [Ezek 20:23–25].

Ezekiel explains before this that the Israelites worshiped idols after God delivered them from Egypt. So let that Christian evangelist take a lesson from this, and also that Jew, the two who censured me for what I wrote in the tenth issue about the Israelites' desire to worship idols, whereas these two claimed that there was no report of this except that of the Qur'an (p. 411, vol. 4.).

Article Four: On Judaism and Christianity Being Derived from Paganism

[16] We mentioned in the previous summary that the beliefs of the Christians, which they have been following for a long period, are derived from pagan beliefs. We stated that the collection of books that, according to the Jews and Christians, is called "Torah" is not the Torah for which the Noble Qur'an testifies. Rather, the Qur'anic Torah consists of the precepts that Moses, peace be upon him, brought and they are – that is, some of them are – in the five books attributed to Moses, except the book of Genesis, which includes his history and mention his death. We explained that there is no means by which the People of the Book can escape from the objections that philosophers, scholars and historians make against their scriptures except by agreeing with the Muslims about this belief.

Here, we present [17] the views of one of the French philosophers who attacks Judaism and Christianity and their scriptures, quoting from the book *The Standard of Religion* by 'Alī Pāshā Mubārak, he of everlasting memory, previously the minister of education.⁴¹ In conversation number

ninety-four, Mubārak gives an English translator's account of the French philosopher's views.

He states that the Torah is a compiled book and not among the heavenly books, relying on the statement of Mary Augustus "that it is not feasible that the first three chapters stand in their present form" and the statement of Eugene to the effect that what is found in the Torah pertaining to the creation of the world is legendary, on the basis that the Hebrew word *barrāh* – which is pronounced with a *fathah* on the *bā'*, doubling of the *rā'*, and *sukūn* on the *hā'* – means "he arranged" and "he ordered".⁴² It is not possible for anyone to "arrange" and "order" something that does not exist. Thus, the application of this word to the creation of the world requires that the material substance of the world was pre-existent and eternal, and that time and space are eternal. Since they say that the matter is the essence of life, it follows that the spirit must also be eternal, since it is through the spirit that life occurs. And inasmuch as matter is light, heat, potency, movement, gravity, natural law and balance, then life and matter are as one thing that cannot be divided. All of this contradicts the Torah.

He also states that the six days Moses mentions for the creation of the world are the six ages of the Hindus, the six *janbaharāt* that Zarathushtra mentions for the Magi, the paradise Adam was in was the garden of Hesperides that the dragon guarded, Adam is Adīmu mentioned in Ayzūrūyidām, and Noah and his people refers to King Deucalion and his wife Bīrā and so on.

He goes far in attacking the Torah, stating that it begins with: a brother's killing of his brother, the violation of women, the marriage of close relatives and, beyond that, domestic animals, and mentioning of robbery, plunder, killing, fornication, and such matters that do not befit being attributed to those God Almighty selects and makes guardian over His divine secrets.

So look at the audacity of this man against the prophet of God, Moses, may peace be upon him, and against the book of God, the Torah, although

the Torah is the foundation of the Gospel, thus what is said of the Torah is [18] said of the Gospel.⁴³

Al-Manār: This sentence and that which follows it is the Englishman's commentary. There is no doubt that the invalidation of the Torah mandates the invalidation of the Gospel and there is no escaping that, save by Islam.

Hence, they say that Jesus' mission was previously well-known to the Jews, on the basis of their doctrine that a *masīḥ* (an anointed one) will come to them. The word *masīḥ* is similar to the word *masāyas*, an honorable title in the Hebrew language. Indeed, Isaiah bestowed this title on Cyrus, the king of Persia, as reported in the fifty-fifth chapter of the Holy Scriptures.⁴⁴ And Ezekiel the prophet bestowed this title upon the king of the city of Tyre. In spite of this, this man paid attention to none of it, and said what he said.

Another Christian belief is the belief that God became incarnate in the form of Jesus and that he is the God. They were not the first to speak of incarnation. Rather, it was said earlier of Jazākā and Brahma, in India's holy city, and it was said that Vishnu became incarnate five hundred times. The inhabitants of Peru in America said that that the true God became incarnate in their god Udīn. The birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary through the triumph of the Holy Spirit resembles the statement of the people of China that their god Fuwah was born of a virgin girl who was impregnated with him by the rays of the sun. The ancient Egyptians believed that Osiris was born without anyone having had sexual intercourse with his mother.

The Christians' statement that Jesus died, was buried, was resurrected and elevated to heaven alive resembles the statement of the ancient Egyptians before them about the Egyptian Osiris, and Adonis by the peoples of Phoenicia and Atis by the peoples of Frigea – except that they did not say that he was elevated to heaven. Similarly, it was said that Odin sacrificed himself, killing himself of his own choice by throwing himself in a terrible fire until he burned, and did so for the salvation of his worshippers and his

people. Likewise, Christians believe that the incarnation of God in Jesus, his sending, and his death, were only to redeem the human race, and save it from the crime of the first sin, namely, the sin of Adam and Eve. As for the prophet Enoch, he was elevated to heaven without having been pardoned for his sin. There is no doubt that this is a legendary tale, and they have numerous others that are similar, whose explanation is lengthy and of no benefit.⁴⁵

[19] *Al-Manār*. Due to these criticisms, and more than that, proofs against the doctrines of the Christians and the Jews, European scholars abandoned the Christian religion. Some openly announced this abandonment and moreover, so did some of their governments. Indeed, the French government made a formal announcement that it had no religion and pursued and persecuted clergy and prominent individuals who persisted in professing religious belief for a political end. For this reason, you see those philosophers and scholars who care about politics declaring disbelief in revelation, in spite of their belief that religion is necessary for humankind. Yet they found no utility in religion as they understood it, while the religion of innate disposition was concealed from them. Hence, they translated The Generous Qur'an poorly, producing a corrupt translation, not understanding the true nature of Islam from it. I give as an example an English translation of *Sūrat al-ʿAṣr* (The Declining Day): "verily, by three hours after noon a man becomes bad or despicable."⁴⁶

Had the philosophers of Europe understood this chapter, they would have asserted that, in spite of its brevity, it dispenses with all that they know from the books of the other religions. The chapter is understood in general terms by any individual who has no more than a rudimentary knowledge of the Arabic language. The chapter is the following:

By the declining day,
Lo! man is in a state of loss,
Save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance [103:1–3].

The individual would know, then, that the wording of the oath is used for emphasis. He would know that "man" refers to mankind in general, that "good works" are acts that improve man's condition, spiritually and bodily, individually and collectively, that "mutual exhortation to truth" is mutual assistance in taking hold of and establishing it, that "the truth" is something established and certain, while the affirmation of anything is determined on its basis, that "endurance" includes renouncing repulsive things—such as sins and harmful desires—and patience in the face of things that are hard to endure, such as defense of the truth and calamities.

Rodwell's 1861 translation (New York: Dutton, 1971) reads:

The Afternoon

I swear by the declining day!

Verily, man's lot is cast amid destruction,

Save those who believe and do the things which be right, and enjoin truth and enjoin steadfastness on each other.

Palmer's translation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900) reads:

The Chapter of the Afternoon

By the afternoon! Verily man is in loss! Save those who believe and do right and bid each other be true, and bid each other to be patient.

Sale's 1734 translation (New York: A.L. Bert) reads:

The Afternoon

By the afternoon,

verily man employeth himself in that which will prove of loss:

Except those who believe, and do that which is right; and who

mutually recommend the truth, and mutually recommend perseverance unto each other.

Among the peoples of Europe, those of Russia and Spain had held most strongly to Christianity. Then recently, the Spaniards suppressed the clergy. The telegraph cable rapidly spread news of this development to every region and newspapers in every country picked up the story.⁴⁷ And when the Russian philosopher Tolstoy disproved [20] the teachings of the Orthodox Church and explained the falsity of the Christian religion, teachers of the sciences and arts – and even the students of the schools, male and female – came to his aid.⁴⁸ Thus, this is the fate of the Christian religion: as an individual grows in knowledge, he distances himself from it. Europe was Christian during the days of the darkness of ignorance and stupidity.⁴⁹ The Islamic religion, the ally of the sciences, stands opposite Christianity. Indeed, its community was at its high point of civilization and science when holding most strongly to its religion, whereas it became distanced from the religion as it distanced itself from science.

As for today, we, indeed, do not deny that some of the educated are following the path of Europeanization. Indeed, they fell victim to some of the criticisms, and some rejected the religion, following the Europeans from whom they learned. However, the reason is that these individuals had never known nor studied Islam, either before studying European thought, or after.

For this reason, we demand of our religion's ulama that they strive to grasp the reins of teaching the universal sciences,⁵⁰ because we have the most complete confidence that it is not possible for an individual who knows Islam to reject it. How can one who has lived in the light choose

darkness? This is a matter to which we shall return, God Almighty willing. (See *al-Manār*, p. 448, vol. 4.)

Article Five: On Responding to the Book Researches of the Mujtahids' Qur'anic Evidence for the Veracity of the Torah and Gospel⁵¹

If someone wishes to debate these Christians who compose books calling the Muslims to Christianity, and utilize objective knowledge in evaluating their literary works, so that he replies to each error that requires a reply, he would need to write a separate book about each of their dark pages, because they talk without restraint. Thus, they make errors concerning what they know and what they do not know, and resort to deluding and deceit, as they write for the common folk who do not investigate carefully.⁵²

[21] In section one of investigation one, the author of the book "*Researches of the Disputatious* – not "*the Mujtahids*"⁵³ – states that he establishes the veracity of the Torah and the Gospel "by incontrovertible argument and logical proof."⁵⁴ He then quotes Qur'anic verses whose meanings, in his view, are disputable rather than clear-cut. He distorts their meaning, as he and those before him distorted the Torah and Gospel.⁵⁵ We explained previously the meaning of "Torah and Gospel," the Qur'anic corroboration of them, and how this corroboration does not

preclude the sending of another prophet with a new and more complete shari'ah. We also explained the purpose of the Islamic religion in its being more befitting for the human condition, and providing greater guidance towards humanity's prosperity. Beyond that, we explained how Paul rendered the shari'ah of the Torah and Gospel worthless, and rendered Christianity libertinism, attaching no value to good acts, but resting upon the belief that Christ came to redeem the world.

How can our friends among the Christian propagandists deem it possible that the eloquent tongue and beguiling of this Jewish man could invalidate the shari'ah of Moses and Jesus, may peace and prayer be upon them, yet not deem it possible that God would send Muḥammad, may the best prayer and peace be upon him, with logical proofs, so that he corroborate the messengers, condemn apostates, censure corruptors, clarify the truth with respect to the disputing of the disputation, and direct his words to the Jews and Christians as Jesus directed his words to the scribes and the Pharisees: stating they did not establish the scripture, but rather embraced the outer shell and forsook the inner kernel? Indeed, had they established it, their condition would not have degenerated and their shame and punishment would not have become necessary. Yet, at the time of the mission, the Jews and Christians were under the greatest shame and punishment and at the extreme limit of willful sin and misguidance. For this reason, after a period of time, their power's prestige was diminished by the sun of Islam: "To help the unbelievers is incumbent upon us" [30:47].

The author of *Researches* relates seven verses from The Glorious Qur'an. He states that the first verse indicates that God Almighty revealed the Torah and the Gospel as guidance for mankind.⁵⁶ Yes, indeed, earlier peoples were rightly guided by both and prospered. Then, they deviated and strayed, were corrupted and became wretched, until Islam brought [22] the greatest guidance and the strongest proof. Some of them were guided by it, prospered and became masters over others. They were with its people who were uppermost, so long as they were guided by it.⁵⁷

He states that the second verse proves the veracity of the Torah and Gospel. The verse is: "[Say:] O People of the Scripture! Ye have naught (of guidance) till ye observe the Torah and the Gospel" [5:68].⁵⁸ And indeed it is so. However, the verse is incomplete. The author does not quote the remainder, as he is not a just man. It is: "and that which was revealed unto you from your Lord" [5:68]. Thus, it is as if he commands us to believe in part of the Book and disbelieve in part, as he and those of his ilk do with the Torah. The intended meaning of "that which was revealed unto them from their Lord" is the Qur'an, as nothing other than it was revealed after the Torah and Gospel.⁵⁹

God Almighty commands the People of the Book to become Muslims, and believe in all the scriptures. And He makes clear that their pretext and protestation against following the Qur'an – that they possess a heavenly book and thus have no need for another – is an invalid protestation and false pretext, as they did not establish the Torah and Gospel. He made this clear in other verses declaring that they corrupted and "forgot a part of that whereof they were admonished" [5:13; 5:14] and that had they established both, shame and ignominy would not have befallen them: "If they had observed the Torah and the Gospel and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would surely have been nourished from above them and from beneath their feet" [5:66]. Thus is what occurred to their brothers who accepted Islam, and they indeed obtained the blessings of the sky and earth. The remainder of the verse with which we are concerned is: "That which is revealed unto thee (Muḥammad) from thy Lord

believers" – Trans. author (adapted from Pickthall) – or Qur'an 47:35: "ye (will be) the uppermost."

is certain to increase the contumacy and disbelief of many of them. But grieve not for the disbelieving folk" [5:68]. This proof stands over them until the day of resurrection. Hence, these evangelists deceive the common Muslims about the necessity of following the Torah, and delude them that in fact they are following it. *Researches'* author states that Muḥammad sought the establishment of its divine statutes. And no one in Christian life establishes any of the Torah's statutes, or acts according to its precepts in worship or social life. Then, wherefore are they concerned for the Muslims, and sincerely advising them about establishing these statutes, while not sincerely advising and being concerned for themselves?

He states: the third verse makes clear that the Gospel descended from God and that Muḥammad submitted to its precepts.⁶⁰ The third verse is the Almighty's statement: "Let the People of the Gospel judge by that which Allah hath revealed therein" [5:47].⁶¹ There is no indication here that Muḥammad, prayer and peace be upon him, submitted to its precepts. Yet [23], to confirm their desires, these people allow themselves to impute to the verses what they do not support. In this way, they have corrupted their own scriptures, and come corrupting our Book for us. But God Almighty preserved it from corruption and alteration. The verse has two readings, the first with a *kasrah* on the *lām*: *li-yaḥkum* (in order to judge), which pertains to the Almighty's statement prior to it: "and We bestowed on him the Gospel" [5:46]. Namely: We gave Jesus the Gospel in order that his people judge by it. "His people" are the Israelites, because the Qur'an informs us that he was sent to the Israelites. Hence, it is known that they were his people. Likewise, the Gospel they now have states that Christ said: "I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" [Mt 15:24].

The second reading has an non-vowelled *lām*: *walyaḥkum*. It is an account of the preceding command with bestowal. Namely: We bestowed on him the Gospel and We commanded the one who was sent to them to act in accordance with it. And the wording permits the reading that it is an

independent command related to remonstrate the Christians for not acting in accordance with the Gospel, which confirms the Torah, and the requirement to act in accordance with the Torah, a matter whose explanation was given previously. If it is possible for the Christian evangelists today to argue against the Muslims that the Qur'an commands them to have faith in and act by the Torah and Gospel and not see that this argument mandates their faith in the Qur'an, then how can they assert that Muḥammad's command, God's blessing and peace be upon him, to them to judge by the Gospel mandates that he submit to its ordinances? (part 14, p. 536. vol. 4.)

Article Six: On the Verses on the Character of the Torah and Gospel

In the previous article, we mentioned that the author of the book *Researches* cites seven verses from the Precious Qur'an, distorting their context to corroborate the scriptures of the Jews and Christians and coerce the Muslims to believe and accept them. In discussing three of these verses, we explained the author's distortions and that the verses are a proof for the Muslims against the Jews and Christians, not vice versa. In this article, we shall discuss the remainder.

He states: "The fourth passes judgment on the error of the Muslim who does not believe in the Torah and Gospel [24] as he believes in the Qur'an."⁶² We say: the fourth verse is God Almighty's statement: "O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His messenger and the Scripture which He hath revealed unto His messenger, and the Scripture which He revealed aforetime" [4:136].⁶³ Muslims believe that their prophet came in truth, corroborated the messengers, and commanded that we believe in God's previous messengers and books. But he did not oblige us to act according to those books, because he dispensed with our need for them

through a book of greater guidance. We are not perplexed as to its transmission, nor misled as to its comprehension. It includes all that is in them in the way of sound doctrine. It is preserved from corruption and error, protected from being lost and forgotten, and contains all that they lack in the way of divine knowledge, as we shall explain presently, God Almighty willing. It is free of the historical accretions and human opinions that were augmented to what remains of the heavenly books.

However, the exegetes disagree as to who is addressed by this verse. It is said that they are the hypocrites, believers outwardly, doubters or deniers inwardly. It is as if He says to them: "O you who profess faith in God, His book, His messenger and all of His books and messengers" – with their tongues and outwardly – "it is incumbent upon you to believe with your hearts, and harmonize what you profess outwardly with what you hold inwardly."

It is said that they are the believers among the People of the Book, based on what was related from Ibn Sallām and his companions. They said: "O messenger of God, we believe in you and your book, in Moses, the Torah and Ezra, while we disbelieve in everything else."⁶⁴ Hence, the verse was revealed. It is said that they are Muslims in general, and Muslims do not consider genuine the faith of a Muslim who disbelieves in the previous prophets or deems their books false. However, they do not oblige him to investigate or act in accordance with them, because God Almighty made them superfluous for us, as we stated. This is because some were lost and forgotten, as the Almighty states: "They forgot a part of that whereof they were admonished" [5:13; 5:14], while, as God states, others were corrupted by "changing words from their context" [5:41]. How can we accept a book of which a major portion has been forgotten? Perhaps the forgotten part explained and commented upon the remainder, or the remainder lacks what is essential. In that case, our acceptance of it would be wrong, or our religion would be deficient, and God's statement about the People

of the Book would apply to us: "Believe ye in part of the Scripture and disbelieve ye in part thereof?" [2:85]. Here, we suffice with obtaining evidence of the People of the Book forgetting a portion of it from the Generous Qur'an, because our debate with the opponent concerns the Qur'anic evidence for the veracity of the scriptures. We shall establish this below with an examination of those books' testimony and statements of the Christian religion's leaders.

[25] The author states: "The fifth verse makes clear that the people of Makkah (Mecca) knew the Torah and the Gospel as they knew the Qur'an."⁶⁵ We say: the verse referred to here is the following: "And those who disbelieve say: We believe not in this Qur'an nor in that which was before it" [34:31].⁶⁶ There is no evidence in the verse supporting what he states, even if it is supposed that "that which was before it" refers to the previous scriptures. This is because the reason for their refusal is faith. It is the call of the Qur'an and the one who brought it to that faith. That is, the reason is that they said: we do not believe in the book that you brought, O Muḥammad, saying it was from God, nor do we believe in the books that you said were brought from God before you. Then, where herein is the evidence that the people of the Makkah (Mecca) knew the Torah and the Gospel specifically and studied them, when they were illiterate? There were no literate individuals among them, and moreover nor were there among the Arabs generally, but for some individuals whose number did not exceed ten (it is said that they were six men). The second exegetical interpretation of the Almighty's statement "nor in that which was before it" is that it refers to the Day of Resurrection and what follows in the way of merit and punishment. This is the more likely interpretation.

The author states: "The sixth verse establishes Muḥammad's confirmation of the scripture's veracity and its equal status with the Qur'an."⁶⁷

We say: he relates the verse thus: "Say: (unto them, O Muḥammad): Then bring a Scripture that giveth clearer guidance than these two (*the Qur'an and the Gospel*) (that) I may follow it" [28:49].⁶⁸ So, reasonable people, look at these people's faithfulness in transmission and at their corruption of meaning. And these are those who are addressing themselves to the Muslims, knowing their intentness on the Glorious Qur'an. God Almighty revealed the verse thus: "Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): Then bring a Scripture from the presence of Allah that giveth clearer guidance than these two (that) I may follow it, if ye are truthful" [28:49]. That is, giving greater guidance than the Qur'an and Torah, not the Qur'an and Gospel, as the book *Researches*' author claims. The evidence for this is the Almighty's statement prior to the verse:

Otherwise, if disaster should afflict them because of that which their own hands have sent before (them), they might say: Our Lord! Why sent Thou no messenger unto us, that we might have followed Thy revelation and been of the believers? But when there came unto them the Truth from Our presence, they said: Why is he not given the like of what was given unto Moses. Did they not disbelieve in that which was given unto Moses of old? They say: Two magics – [Riḍā:] "*sāḥrān*" and in [26] another reading "*siḥrān*" – that support each other; and they say: Lo! in both we are disbelievers [28:47–48].⁶⁹

The wisdom of attributing unbelief in Moses to them is to demonstrate nations' dispositions and humans' behavioral similarities, even such that the present be identical to the past. Hence, philosophers say, "history repeats itself." These verses are an argument against the arrogant and a clear-cut proof for the tongues of the resisters. They contain no evidence for equivalence between the Qur'an and Torah in every respect. Indeed, the idolaters' inability to produce a book from God giving greater

guidance that that brought by Moses, and that brought by Muḥammad, does not necessitate that the scriptures that former brought is equivalent to that brought by the latter. Do you see: were it said to an individual ignorant of the science of logic, one who rejects his ulama and his scriptures, "Write me a book that is better than the book *Īsāghūjī*⁷⁰ and the book *al-Baṣā'ir al-Nāsiriyyah*,"⁷¹ would we say that this statement demonstrates that these two books are equal in every respect?

The author states: "The seventh demonstrates the clear corroboration that the Torah is sound, uncorrupted, that it contains the ordinance of God, and that its follower has no need to appoint as judge any individual other than it."⁷² We say: the seventh verse is the following: "How come they unto thee for judgment when they have the Torah, wherein Allah hath delivered judgment (for them)" [5:43]. This is what the author related of the verse. The remainder is: "Yet even after that they turn away. Such (folk) are not believers" [5:43]. The verse does not furnish evidence for that which he states about it, as we shall explain clearly here.

The verse is related to express wonder at the state of the Jews who chose the Prophet, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, as arbitrator in certain of their disputes, while disbelieving in his prophecy, such as those who sought his ruling for one among their high-born who had committed adultery. They said: "If he rules that the sentence for this crime is flogging, we shall accept his judgment. But if he rules a sentence of stoning, we will not accept his judgment" – although the sentence for adultery is stipulated for them in the Torah. But they sought to observe the easiest and lightest sentence. The sense of wonderment is that these people lack

confidence in their religion and compliance with their scripture. Hence, they appoint as judge Muḥammad, the master of a law other than their law, their law that they claim to be from God and to contain His ordinance, which is before them. It is amazing that they do not accept Muḥammad's ruling when it is consistent with their own. This is the ultimate distance from true and pure faith in their own scripture. Hence, the Almighty said after questioning their astonishing appointment of a judge: "Yet even after that they turn away. Such (folk) are not believers" [5:43]. That is, [27] their faith in their scripture was not genuine, first, because they shunned it, appealing to you for a decision, O Muḥammad. Then, second, they discarded your ruling, which was consistent with it. Or, the verse denies their faith without qualification, since the attribute of genuine faith includes that which He mentioned, and faith in the prophet Muḥammad, may prayer and peace be upon him, and that which he brought. That is, their souls were corrupted and their confidence in religion absolutely voided, to the extent that it will not ever be regained.

It is clear that a statement about God's ordinance or numerous precepts being in a book does not mandate that that book, in its entirety, is sound, free of corruption, and includes all that God Almighty revealed. I give as an example the book *Sīrat al-Ḥalabiyyah*,⁷³ which contains God's ordinance. But I do not believe that the book in its entirety is from God Almighty, is free from corruption, and that therefore there is no need for any other book. Rather, I believe that, in spite of this, it contains independent statements, the author's opinions and unsound transmissions. We are indeed in need of a book other than it. (p. 574, vol. 4.)

**Article Seven: On Responding to the Periodical *Bashā'ir al-Salām*
(The Glad Tidings of Peace) – Comparison between Jews and Muslims;
Muḥammad's Superiority over Moses and the Rest of the Prophets**

In the previous part, we completed refuting the criticisms in section one of the first investigation of the book *Researches of the Mujtahids*, the book whose author composed to corroborate the books called the Torah and Gospel with the testimony of the Qur'an. We had resolved to begin this part by refuting the criticisms of section two, which the author wrote for the purpose of proving those books with reason. But then we received the fifth part of the Protestant periodical entitled *Bashā'ir al-Salām* (The Glad Tidings of Peace), seeing in it a great attack against Islam and a long swim in the seas of delusion.⁷⁴ We wanted to shoot it with the truth, so that the truth refute it, and it come to nothing.⁷⁵ We will return, God Almighty willing, to critiquing that book in the forthcoming parts. (See Article 8.) The periodical's attack is divided into three sections:

The First Part: The Blessed Family Tree

[28] In this section, the author praises the Israelites and explains their virtue. He grants them more than their worth, but he does not grant God his due right.⁷⁶ He glorifies them while violating decency with regard to God Almighty. He praises the Israelite genealogical tree while defaming in the matter of the divinity. He has a discussion about that – "Whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins" [19:90] – such as the following (and he who relates unbelief is not himself an unbeliever):⁷⁷

Are you not amazed that the creator of the heavens and the earth is alone with the Israelites in the wilderness where He addresses them and they address Him, and He sees them and they see His majesty. Among them Moses is the one spoken to.⁷⁸ God was deep in conversation with him, exchanging various topics of discourse with him, like two people accustomed to each other and two friends very much at ease with each other.

He then shifts from this to disparaging the master of the messengers, the seal of the prophets, the one through whom God completed religion, and to denigrating all people. He says:

So listen, O Muslim reader, and be confounded and be amazed. Is not Muḥammad for you the greatest of creation? Yet he was not worthy of addressing God directly, neither hearing His voice nor seeing His majesty, as did the general folk of the Israelites, to say nothing of their élite. Moreover, he was not worthy of addressing Gabriel (as you acknowledge). Rather, he was overcome with the feeling of fainting and moaning, straining him, so that his forehead sweated on a day of severe cold.

Thus ends his confused and haphazard discussion.

We say: paganism has become deeply ingrained in these people. Its roots have permeated the depths of their souls to such an extent that its removal has become impossible so long as they do not attach importance to action or see it as a value upheld by the religion's scriptures. The detailed explanation of their error is lengthy, and our entire periodical is not sufficient for it. For this reason, we suffice with summary, and we speak with the tongue of pure reason, not that of Islam, that being more conducive to being met with approval.

(1) Muslims report that their prophet Muḥammad, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, ascended to heaven and saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.⁷⁹ Beyond that, most of them say – without specifying how⁸⁰ – that he saw God, be He Praised and Almighty, and spoke with Him [29] without an intermediary.

Moses, may peace be upon him, and those among the Israelites who were with him, however, saw lightning, heard thunder and a trumpet, were covered by smoke like the smoke of an oven, and the mountain shook by them. Hence, they trembled and stood at a distance “and said to Moses, ‘You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die’” [Ex 20:19]. Moreover, the Lord said: “Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you; but do not let either the priests or the people break through to come up to the Lord; otherwise he will break out against them” [Ex 19:24]. All of this is clearly stated in chapters nineteen and twenty of the book of Exodus. It exposes the falsity of the periodical's claim that the common folk among the Israelites addressed God directly and heard His voice. So what is this falsification and deceit? The Qur'an relates: “And Moses fell down senseless” [7:143], while it states of Muḥammad: “The eye turned aside nor yet was overbold. Verily he saw one of the greater revelations of his Lord” [53:17–18].⁸¹ Thus, is it just that you say, “we are those who are truthful because we say ...”?

been translated as “without asking how,” “in the sense in which God intended,” “without further comment,” and “without qualifying God in any manner applicable to His creation.” “Without how” addresses the tension between the principles of utter dissociation and anthropomorphism. The latter might be supported by traditions referring to Muḥammad “speaking with” God and Qur'anic references to God's “hand,” “face,” and “throne.” However, it was rejected by the Muslim majority, its proponents being described as “those who make God like a man.” By accepting the doctrine of “without how,” Muslim scholars attempted to solve the problem of anthropomorphic language by finding an appropriate midpoint between literal and metaphorical interpretation, or by asserting that such language was to be interpreted neither literally (that is, anthropomorphically) nor metaphorically. Watt notes that since 'Asharī's time, there has been a general trend away from this position and towards acceptance of metaphorical interpretation. Watt, “Akīda,” in *EI*. Since Riḍā's time the tendency amongst educated Arab Muslims has been to play down the superhuman aspects of Muḥammad's personality. The tension between utter dissociation and anthropomorphism – *tanzīh* and *tashbīh* – is integral both to Riḍā's debates with his Christian opponents and to the issue of fundamentalist literalism.

(2) The Israelites who were favored with this special care, and Aaron, who alone God permitted to ascend with Moses, without the priests and the youth, did not observe the most important of the commandments with which the Lord commissioned them that day. On the contrary, they abandoned the first and most important, namely: "you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is . . . *et cetera*" [Ex 20:3–4]. Indeed, according to your assertion and that of your scriptures, Aaron was the one who obtained the calf for them that they then worshiped instead of God. Were these not the people who were favored with that special care and honor? Then, they committed this momentous act of disbelief, thereby deserving God's anger and hatred, the removal of His blessing from them, and its conferral upon another people, such as the Arab people, through whom God removed paganism from millions of people. It did not return to them, thanks be to Him and the completeness of His blessing.

The evidence of the Lord's anger towards the Israelites includes what we related in the third section (p. 317. part 11) about the book of Ezekiel. (See Article 3.) So, after this, is his evidence sound that God, be He Almighty and Holy, is still infatuated – far be He from such imperfection – with the Israelites and angry with the rest of His creation, and that their common folk are superior to . . . It is strange that he use verses [30] from The Mighty Qur'an as evidence of God blessing the Israelites, but does not use them as evidence of their ingratitude for blessing and affliction with punishment!

(3) In the Muslim view, the fundamental basis of faith is God Almighty's utter dissociation from resemblance to created beings. Thus, if an expression is related in revelation whose apparent meaning contradicts God's dissociation, they divert it from its apparent meaning by way of metaphorical and allegorical interpretation. It appears that the fundamental base, in the view of others, is anthropomorphism and paganism, especially those who turn a human being into a god. Thus, if a statement is related in their scriptures contradicting God's dissociation, they add to it its manifold meanings and are ingenuous in analogizing about it. For example, it is related that God Almighty spoke with Moses, so Muslims

de-anthropomorphize Him with regard to voice, direction, and place. They say: this is only a divine proclamation of an attribute worthy of God's glory that God Almighty has named speech. This is definitely not the speech of people among each other. Otherwise, the Almighty would resemble created things, which constitutes the destruction of the essence of religion and faith. As for the Christians, they say the like of that which we reported previously about the periodical *The Glad Tidings of Peace*: "and He was deep in conversation with Moses," and that the two of them were like two well-acquainted friends, and so on. This is clearly anthropomorphism. No wonder, since one who would say that Christ is a god would say that the God met privately with Moses, exchanging various topics of discourse with him: "Exalted be God Almighty above that."⁸²

(4) The periodical is confused in what it says about the Prophet's state, may God's blessing and peace be upon him, at the time of the revelation. This is because it is based upon hadiths that the writer misunderstands. In the hadith "the beginning of the revelation," he interprets the statement "he enveloped me" (*ghaṭṭanī*) as referring to snoring (*ghaṭīṭ*), the sound made by one sleeping or that of the braying camel. This is incorrect. Rather, it means "he embraced me with strength and pressure."⁸³

He then conflates this hadith with a hadith describing revelation and its effect.⁸⁴ The periodical's author claims that being unaffected by

revelation is superior and more perfect. This is a maliciously invented claim lacking supporting evidence. We say: the prophet's condition was one of the conditions of revelation. Perhaps the like of it did not occur for Moses, affecting him as Muḥammad was affected, may peace be upon them both. However, a less excellent individual may have [experiences] that a more excellent individual lacks. If we concede that Moses was superior to Muḥammad in terms of this virtue, there are numerous distinctions by which Muḥammad is superior to Moses. It is incredible that a writer such as this, who [31] did not grant God his due right, compares the virtues of God's prophets, may prayer and peace be upon them, on the basis of nothing more than his desire and poor understanding.⁸⁵

That Periodical's Second Part: On Ishmael

The periodical's writer under-rates Ishmael, may peace be upon him, when comparing him with Isaac. If his statement, reporting and evidence about them are correct – in terms of Isaac's superiority and being the one who was sacrificed – the religion of Islam is not harmed in any respect. His statement on this matter does not necessitate any time being spent critiquing it.

The Third Part: New Testament Authors and the Call to Religion

There are two questions in the periodical's question and answer section. One is from a Muslim friend of theirs who asked them: "Are Peter, Paul, John and the other New Testament authors messengers (*rusul*) of God, and is there an Old Testament prophecy (*nubūwah*) of their sending, as there is for Christ?" The periodical's answer is that they are messengers of God. We say: a Muslim who knows Islamic doctrine would not ask this question, because a messenger in Muslim belief is a prophet through whom an independent religion is revealed, a religion that he is commanded to convey to the people.⁸⁶ Christians themselves do not claim this sense of

mission for Peter, Paul and the other writers of the gospels and New Testament letters. [Second], Muslims do not use the word "prophecy" as it is used in the question, namely, to mean "glad tidings" (*bishārah*), whereas [Christians] argued for the apostleship of those whom the questioner mentions on the basis of miracles. And indeed, more is related about each of the Muslim *awliyā'* than about them and Christ, peace be upon him. Yet Muslims do not claim that the *awliyā'* are messengers.⁸⁷

The second question is from another of their friends: "Why are Christians unique in their practice of dispatching missionaries and having continued to do so from the time of their first appearance until the present day?" The answer: "Verily Christianity is guidance, and whenever guidance is present in the heart, it is not possible for its possessor to restrain himself and conceal it from his people or keep it secret from them." The periodical then states that Christians are unique in guidance.

We say: First, no religion among the religions of the world arose except through mission and no individual calls others to a religion but that some follow him. However, some are propagated through their [32] inherent power, namely, the power of right guidance and dominion over souls, such as Islam. Others are propagated through coercion and compulsion, such as the Christian religion. Hence, for three centuries it remained embraced by only a few individuals. Then, some pagan kings converted to it and compelled people to embrace it with coercion, as we shall explain presently with historical testimony, God Almighty willing. Second, the Israelites, God's chosen people, who were extolled by the periodical's author, did not call others to their religion even at the time of Christ, who was one of them. So was their religion at that time one of error or right guidance? Third, the Baha'is, who speak of the

Bahā'⁸⁸ – who is buried in Acre – as Christians speak of Christ, call others to their religion in every area in which they are found, almost to the extent that every Baha'i is a missionary. Would this periodical's editors maintain that they are rightly guided and that abandoning Christ's worship and worshipping the Bahā', or combining the two, is obligatory? Fourth, the answer obliges every Christian to become a missionary for his religion, as a Christian is rightly guided and the possessor of guidance is unable to conceal it. However, we see that mission is limited to those individuals among them who draw wages for it from the missionary societies. Hence, they call others to join their religion because mission is their livelihood, not because it is right guidance in their hearts, that overflows from them upon their fellow humans. Fifth, we see virtuous Christians criticizing these hired Christian missionaries, saying that they do not benefit Christianity but rather harm it, while among the newspaper editors are those who criticize them in writing. Sixth, every practitioner of a religion believes that he is rightly guided. An individual, moreover, is provoked to action by belief itself, not by the matter in which the individual believes. Otherwise, no individual would promulgate a law, nor would anyone call others to a falsehood. But obstacles prevent mission.

As for true mission, whose possessors plunge headlong into with the full force of belief, it is the mission of the disciples of Christ, prayer and peace be upon him. Few joined them in faith, while millions believed in Muslim mission for many centuries. A Muslim trader would enter one of the kingdoms of Africa or Asia, that kingdom in its entirety then embracing Islam at his hand. This mission was not cut off entirely. Rather, it became weakened through the weakening of Islam, the loss of religious education, neglect of the true Islamic sciences, the weakening of Islamic civic culture and civilization, [33] the Islamic countries' neglect of religion, and Muslims depending on their kings, emirs and governments, in violation of that which Islam imposes upon them. And the Shi'ah and Buhrā (Isma'ilis) are still calling others to embrace their religion as much

as they can.⁸⁹ These kings and emirs are the first obstacle on the path to Islam, the second obstacle being the strong European kings who assist their missionaries, protecting them after dispatching them for mission, even to the extent of waging war against a kingdom under the pretext of supporting a single priest. It is European power, then, that gave voice to these missionaries' tongues, set their pens in motion, and aimed their arrows to hit their opponents. Thus, it is clear that the true answer to the question is that the Christians evangelize because politics drives them, guineas follow them, and guns protect them (that is, defend them).⁹⁰

As for the Muslims, in spite of their scientific, social and political weakness, they are still calling others to the religion, motivated by the motivation of faith. But they do this with a weakness that is strengthened by the power of truth, making it more successful and more liable to meet with acceptance. Christian missionaries constantly complain about Islam's progress and outstripping of Christianity in Africa, notwithstanding the intensity of the attention paid to its diffusion. They have a likely explanation for that in Islam being nearer to mankind's innate disposition and intelligence. We shall publish some of the Christian clergy's discussions on that point, God willing. (part 16., p. 619., vol. 4.)

Article Eight: On the Books of the New Testament

[33] *Researches'* author determined that the first investigation's second section would logically prove the veracity of the Torah and Gospel.⁹¹ The proof's confirmation is that God is omnipotent and wise. Thus, there can be no doubt that He set down a constitution and wrote a law for His rational creatures, so that they would come to know their relationship to their

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[33] *Researches'* author determined that the first investigation's second section would logically prove the veracity of the Torah and Gospel.⁹¹ The proof's confirmation is that God is omnipotent and wise. Thus, there can be no doubt that He set down a constitution and wrote a law for His rational creatures, so that they would come to know their relationship to their

Creator, their obligations towards Him and one another, the destiny of all people, the unbelievers' punishment, and obedient believers' reward. [34] Thus, they would not be lost in chaos, lacking a coercive leader and a law-giver, being as cattle, some trampling others, or as fish, the big eating the small, some people destroying others, virtue and sin being equivalent. This would be unacceptable for God, the Omnipotent and Wise. He then asks:

Thus, if that constitution and law were not the Torah and Gospel, then tell me, by your life, what are they? Is there an ancient holy book that achieves the intended purpose, as do the Torah and Gospel? By my life, there is not.⁹²

Al-Manār: We do not respond to the author's shortcoming in establishing the fact of the law's necessity, since readers can see this by comparing it with what we wrote, and will write, explaining the need for revelation from dictated religious lessons. However, we remind him of matters that, should he contemplate them, would make his argument's invalidity plain to him:

(1) and (2) Why, before the Torah, did God leave humanity without a law for thousands of years – we do not know their number – if that would not please Him? Why was this wisdom of His not made apparent except recently, to the Israelites, when all people are his servants, and the reason given necessitates its appearance to all people? These two questions refute him and every Jew and Christian who advocates his position. But they do not refute Muslims, because the Qur'an resolves this difficulty in the Almighty's statements about messengers: "[Verily We sent messengers before thee,] among them those of whom We have told thee, and some of whom We have not told thee [40:78]; And there is not a nation but a warn-er hath passed among them" [35:24]. We believe that God sent messengers to all the nations that, through their high level of cultural development, had the potential for elevation to understanding His oneness, their number is not known, but by the Almighty.

(3) Were the people of China like cattle, some trampling others, or fish, the big eating the small, lacking a guide and a restrainer? Or were they rather in possession of civilization and virtue, both before and after the Israelites' existence? History informs us that that they were more advanced than the Israelites in science, knowledge, civilization, and order, which the law requires for its development. They were more advanced than the Christians were when they possessed nothing but the religion that their saint Paul had spread among them, and which advanced them in nothing but enmity, hatred, conflict, strife, war, and murder in the period they call "The Dark Ages," while the Chinese lived in tranquility, peace, agreement, and concord. Further, that which is said of the Chinese [35] may also be said of the Hindus. Difficulties such as this do not pertain to Muslims because, in accordance with the Qur'an's guidance, they allow that God Almighty sent prophets among the Chinese and Hindus who guided them to that which they attained in the way of happiness. Thereafter, history took its course with them, and they mingled their religion with inherited pagan tendencies until they diverted it from its true course. We believe the Christians did likewise, since there is no doubt that, in its original form, their religion was heavenly and monotheistic. Thereafter, they mingled it with the worship of human beings, such as Christ, his mother, and others.

(4) Europeans dispensed with the Torah's law, favoring positive law, and they dispensed with the ethics of the Torah and Gospel, favoring those of philosophy. They discarded asceticism, shaking the dust of humiliation off their heads. With this, they were successful, and rose from the condition in which they had been during the days when they held fast to "The Holy Book." How, then, can you state that this book alone guides mankind and refines human morality, when reality, in fact, points to the contrary? This difficulty does not pertain to Muslims, because they believe that the Jews and Christians "forgot a part of that whereof they were admonished" [5:13; 5:14] in the revelation. The remainder was corrupted and abrogated, and thus was no longer sound for human guidance. Muslims also believe that Europeans, in their good morals, are the closest people to the religion of Islam. These morals include self-dignity, high motivation, seriousness in

work, honesty, trustworthiness, being guided by universal laws, seeking guidance in the laws of innate human disposition, abiding by what can be rationally proven, and others. Muslims believe that as Europeans were guided to this through research and the broadening of knowledge, they will likewise be guided to the rest of that which Islam brought in the way of doctrine, morality, virtue, and practice.

(5) All that the author mentions in explaining the need for the law was more completely manifest among the Muslims. Such completeness was not known among the Jews and Christians. Thus, Muslims knew what God Almighty requires and what is required in terms of the servant's rights. Their condition improved through religion. In every age, their opinions converged, their morals were refined, and their civilization ascended in a degree commensurate with that of their establishment of the religion. Of this, history is an honest witness.

(6) If the Torah indeed made clear all that the author mentions in terms of the human need for the law, then why did the Gospel come into existence? If the Torah was deficient, then why did God set it down deficiently, not fulfilling this need? [36] How, on the strength of this opinion, is the evidence for the rational affirmation of the Torah and Gospel complete for him? This problem does not pertain to Muslims who believe in the veracity of the original Torah and Gospel, as they maintain that each befit its time. Thereafter, social reverses befell, sweeping away the benefit and utility, and afflicting the condition of the people affiliated with the two scriptures. Hence, God renewed the law with Islam, in a manner of general reform, every cloud lifting by its light. God preserved his book from corruption and alteration, in order that those who had lost the way could return to it.

(7) If the Torah comprises that which he mentions, as previously mentioned, then why did the Christians abandon it, neglect its law, and desert its statutes, as we explained in certain previous responses? (See Articles 3 and 5.)

(8) If the Old and New Testament books were truly divine, then why are disparity, mutual contradiction, conflicting testimony and that which clashes with reason – the sole means by which religion is understood and known – found therein? We briefly discussed its clash with reason in

certain previous sections (see Articles 1 and 4), and we shall presently explain in detail all that we allege here.

(9) If these books were divine, if they satisfied what the author mentions of the people's need for revealed laws, why is there in them what thereby violates fundamental principles and specific provisions of revealed law? Take, for example, God's resemblance to His creation, or the attribution of vile deeds to the prophets, those who are the most truthful of people and the first in being rightly guided by the religion that they received from Him, glorified and exalted be He. Other examples include that which contradicts sound morality, as we alluded to previously and will explain further. For now, we suffice with some allusions from al-Abū Ṣirī's *Lāmiyyah*, God Almighty's blessing be upon him, who says of the Old Testament's character and of its people:⁹³

It is enough for them that they likened their worshiped god
– be He glorified! – to His servants thoroughly

And that they entered a dome for his sake
When they resolved to make for Syria

And that Israel wrestled with his Lord
And threw Him down, Thanks be to Israel

And that they heard the speech of their god
While their right path would be to hear it transmitted⁹⁴

[37] And that they played for their Lord to hear
drums and horns during the war

And that the Lord of the worlds reconsidered
In the creation of Adam, Oh what ignorance they ascribe to Him

And that He for the sake of Adam and his son
Clapped His hands together in sorrow and astonished
And reconsidered concerning the people of Noah, and drew back
Biting His fingertips in sorrow and astonishment.ⁱ

And that Abraham tried to feed Him
Bread and desired to wash His feet.ⁱⁱ

And that the monies of the people were made lawful
For them through usury, breach of faith, and theft.⁹⁵

And that they did not go out of their land
As if they reckoned exiting to be an entry

And they did not desist from calumniating David nor
Lot, and how they calumniated Reubenⁱⁱⁱ

And they attributed to Jacob, through his sons,
Mention of doing the terrible deed frighteningly⁹⁶

And to Christ and his mother, and she is sufficient
As a righteous exemplar, carrying him as a virgin⁹⁷

- i. Riḍā's footnote: in this verse and that which precedes it "it occurred to Him" means that a new view appeared to Him. The book of Genesis relates that the Lord was sorry and felt sad because He had created Adam. This makes God one who changes His mind and an ignorant person [Gn 6:6]. The same point applies to Noah and his people.
- ii. Riḍā's footnote: See Genesis 18.
- iii. Riḍā's footnote: Here, the author is referring to the accusation that David committed adultery with the wife of Uriah (see 2 Samuel 11) and that Lot committed adultery with his daughters (see Genesis 19) and as for Rūbīl, they call him Reuben, see the story of the false accusation against him (Genesis 35).

And by your father, did Judah not give a ring
For adultery with a married woman, and a headcloth^{iv}

They untruthfully twisted tongues in what
They said of Lea and Rachael.^v

And they alleged that Solomon the prophet was an unbeliever
And it was easy for them to inflict on him invented falsehood^{vi}

And they inflicted harm on Aaron with the calf that
they accused him of fashioning in error^{vii}

[38] Until he said:

God is most great, verily the religion of Muḥammad
And his book is stronger and straighter in that which it says⁹⁸

The sun of guidance shone with it for mankind
The greatness of its perfection would not admit of its setting

And the truth shone clearly in its law that
Combined principles and provisions for guidance

Do not mention the books before it
The morning has risen and extinguished the candles

Their monuments have been effaced, would you not seek news
Of them in inscriptions, verily they are wiped out ruins

It is obvious that these invectives, which contradict that which the author and others wrote about the evidence for humanity's need for the law, and that would not befit being revealed from heaven, do not pertain to those

- iv. Riḍā's footnote: In Genesis 38 it is related that Judah committed adultery with his daughter in law, thinking that she was a prostitute, and promised her a goat and gave her a ring and his headcloth and staff, as a deposit for that, and she bore twins by him.
- v. Riḍā's footnote: see the story in Genesis 29–30.
- vi. Riḍā's footnote: in First Kings 11 it is related that the women inclined Solomon to worship idols (may God absolve him).
- vii. Riḍā's footnote: see Exodus 32.

Muslims who speak of the truth of the Torah and Gospel as we explained previously. See the fifth part (namely, part 5, volume 4⁹⁹). (p. 654. vol. 4.)

Article Nine: Also on the Books of the Two Testaments

[38] In the eighth section, published in the seventeenth part, we explained the book *Researches*' author's opinion on the logical confirmation of the two testaments' books. We clearly demonstrated the invalidity of this opinion. Here, we discuss that which he mentions after that, namely, his attempt to argue for impossibility of the Torah and Gospel having been altered. His argument against that possibility is that the two religions, Judaism and Christianity, were spread throughout both Eastern and Western worlds: "And the scripture, especially the Gospel, was translated from the original Greek and Hebrew languages into each language of the peoples that it encountered, including Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Coptic, and Latin."¹⁰⁰ He states:

How, then, is it conceivable that these thousands of people, given their differences in language and doctrine, would gather together and come to an agreement on altering the scripture, especially given that the Christians were divided into factions, each debating the other? Thus, there is no question that the Muslim claim that it was altered lacks [39] supporting evidence. Otherwise, let them tell us, where are the verses that have been changed? Which verses are they? What is their origin? What purpose underlies their alteration? If they are unable to do so, and it is indisputable that they are, then say to them: how can you make this claim, when a wise scholar would not embark on a matter unless he can prove his claim.¹⁰¹

The rebuttal to this fraudulent argument is easily found in the books of the two testaments, collectively known as the Torah and Gospel, and the books of church and general history. As for the Muslim who is not conversant with them, it suffices him to state that that which contradicts the Qur'an is not from the Torah, nor from the Gospel, since the Qur'an has

been definitively proven and transmitted broadly and without interruption, orally and in writing. Those books are not like that. Furthermore, parts of God's revelation do not contradict other parts, except in the case of abrogated rulings.¹⁰² Hence, there is no question that preference be given to the Qur'an in the event of a contradiction concerning any matter other than the abrogated rulings, because it has been definitively proven, as many Christian scholars acknowledge. Indeed, in the book *The Cutting Swords in the Teaching of Christopher Jibārah* Muḥammad Efendi Ḥabīb – who converted to Christianity and then reconverted to Islam having put the former to the test – states:

Mr Stobart, president of La Martiniere College in Lucknow, British India, explains on page 87 of his book *Islam and its Founder*, to quote literally, "there are ample and sufficient grounds for believing that the existing Koran consists of the genuine words, and is the original composition of the prophet, as learned or transcribed under his own instruction."¹⁰³ Muir, considered among the most adept, proficient and forceful enemies of Islam today, states likewise.¹⁰⁴

As for the changing, alteration and corruption of the two testaments' books, Muslims do not assert that these books, in their entirety, were heavenly and soundly transmitted from the prophets, and that the Jews and Christians subsequently altered them after dispersing throughout the East and West, and each people embracing Judaism and Christianity had translated them into their own languages. However, investigation into their origin, original authors, and those who received them from them before that great dispersal [reveals] the problematic matter and crippling disease for which [40] the People of the Book lack a remedy or cure. This is: who wrote the five books attributed to Moses, peace be upon him? The People of the Book say that Moses wrote them, placing in them that which the Lord told him. Thus, they were a history of him and his shari'ah. But how can this answer be correct when these books speak about Moses in the third person, and the last chapter mentions his death and burial?

Some claim that that this chapter was written by Joshua. But how can this be correct when the chapter contains a report about Joshua that he was filled with the spirit and with wisdom, and that all the Israelites

Sir William Muir (1819–1905) was an influential British Islamicist who, as Ḥabīb's comment suggests, was generally regarded as hostile to Islam by Muslim intellectuals. Muir was dismissive of the Qur'an's scriptural status, deeming it a mere historical source on Muḥammad's experience. In his *The Life of Mahomet* (London: Smith, Elder, 1896), Muir commented, "tradition [that is, the Qur'an] cannot in general be received with too much caution." (quoted in Gaudeul, vol. 1., 256). Hence, the impression created by the passage Riḍā cites requires some qualification. Muir's other important works include *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline and Fall* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1891), *The Corān: its composition and teaching and the testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1878), *Extracts from the Coran in the original: with English rendering* (London: Trubner & Co., 1885).

Riḍā adopts a similar line of argument in *al-Wahy al-Muḥammadī*. He cites certain statements in, or referring to, European works praising the Prophet's character and/or appearing to confirm the Muslim view of Qur'anic origins, in spite of the fact that he deemed their authors, like Muir, generally highly hostile towards Islam. Examples include Edouard Montange's introduction to his French translation of the Qur'an and Emile d'Armougon's *The Life of Muhammad*. Riḍā did not read French. See DeLorenzo, 18; 37.

obeyed him? This account about him, then, is from someone other than him. Moreover, how could it be that Joshua would deceive, adding something to the book of Moses without attributing it to himself? Perhaps they seek evidence for this in the fact that the book of Joshua begins with the conjunctive particle "and" (*wāw al-'atf*). Indeed, the first phrase of the book is, "And after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord" *et cetera* [Josh 1:1]. There is [other] evidence that the last chapter is not from Joshua that is stronger than that of the account about him and his innocence of deceit. This evidence is that the following sentence is mentioned in the chapter after the account of Moses' burial: "but no one knows his burial place to this day" [Deut 34:6]. This indicates that it was written long after Moses. Were it written by Joshua, it could not be thus. On that basis, it suffices us to say that they are in grave doubt about this. How, then, can this book be trusted and be said to have been transmitted broadly and without interruption – and from whom was it transmitted? – when its origin is in doubt?

In chapter 31 of the book of Deuteronomy is the following:

(24) When Moses had finished writing down in a book the words of this law to the very end, (25) Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord saying, (26) "Take this book of the law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God; let it remain there as a witness against you. (27) For I know well how rebellious and stubborn you are. If you already have been so rebellious toward the Lord while I am still alive among you, how much more after my death! (28) Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officials, so that I may recite these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. (29) For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly, turning aside from the way that I have commanded you. In time to come trouble will befall you, because you will do what is evil." *Et cetera*.

This, then, is the Torah that Moses wrote as a single work in a particular book. It is God's speech [41], verified by the Qur'an. So where is it? Those Moses said would act corruptly after him, deviating from the path of the truth, namely the Torah: what did they do with it? What befell the Torah due to their corruption, deviation, and stubborn errors? "The Torah"

means the shari'ah, whereas these five books are historical books. In them are some of the rulings of that shari'ah, as there are for the Muslims some Qur'anic verses and rulings in the prophet's biography. The prophet's biography is not the Qur'an, nor is it the Islamic revealed law. As there is in the prophet's biography, in spite of the careful attention paid to its transmission, both that which is sound and that which is unsound, it is more befitting that there be in the histories of Moses and other Israelite prophets that which is sound and that which is unsound. Their author did not examine them with even a portion of the Muslim narrators' care in their examination of their prophet's biography. Moreover, we stated that the authors of those histories are unknown.

The author of the book *Summary of the High Proofs for the Veracity of the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion* (*Khulāṣat al-Adillah al-Saniyyah 'alā Ṣidq Uṣūl al-Diyānah al-Masīhiyyah*)¹⁰⁵ acknowledges that the original copy of Moses' book

was once removed from its place and fell into danger when idol worship prevailed in the kingdom of Menesa and Amon, as true worship of God was cut off among the Israelites. At that time, it was discarded along with the old things,¹⁰⁶ whence it was rediscovered in the kingdom of Hosea the Pious.¹⁰⁷

He then states:

It is impossible that the original copy of Moses' book survived until the present day. We do not know what happened to it. The more likely possibility is that it was lost along with the ark when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple. This might be the reason for a tradition that was in circulation among the Jews, stating that the holy books had been lost and that Ezra the Scribe, who was a prophet, gathered together the scattered copies of the holy books and corrected their mistakes. Thus, they regained their original status.

Would the reader of these and similar statements be deceived by the book *Researches*' author's [42] statement that the scripture was preserved among thousands of people in numerous languages?¹⁰⁸ The scholars of theology in his school acknowledge that the worship of God was lost among the Jews after the worship of idols had prevailed, that the only transcript of the Torah was lost and that its existence is therefore impossible. They acknowledge that the Jews confessed that all of their books were lost, because they were in the Temple that the pagans destroyed, taking the books and destroying them. Hence, they lacked an authoritative record of their religion's fundamental basis, except for Josephus' assertion that every Israelite tribe had a copy of the Torah. But where are these copies? If his assertion is correct – and it is the report of a solitary authority¹⁰⁹ with which he supports his religion – then those would be the copies that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed.

Thus, there remains a sole point for us to investigate. This is the claim that Ezra the Scribe wrote all of the Jewish scriptures as they were originally and, moreover, corrected their original mistakes, thereby improving them. On this point, Muslims enquire about the evidence for this and about the reason for the occurrence of mistakes in the copies, such that they required Ezra's emendations. They also enquire about the copy of the Torah that was, as Moses wrote it, an independent shari'ah, and about its uninterrupted successive transmission to Ezra. They then ask: if it were possible that Ezra the Priest corrected the errors in the Holy Books, then why is it not also possible that Muḥammad, the Messenger of God and the seal of the prophets, would do likewise? By God, prejudice is indeed a disease of the heart that intervenes between it and truth's reception. O God, inspire these people to seek the truth with sincerity and devotion, and judge between them and us in truth. And You are the best arbiter.

Is it related in their holy books that Ezra wrote the Torah and the rest of the holy books as they were? Indeed it is not. It is related in chapter seven of the Book of Ezra that during the reign of Artaxerxes, King of

Persia, Ezra went up (and his relationship with Aaron is mentioned, he being related to him through fifteen fathers) from Babylon, was a skillful writer in the shari'ah of Moses – the shari'ah bestowed by the Lord, the God of Israel – and that he went to Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign. It states:

(10) For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach the statutes and ordinances in Israel. (11) This is a copy of the letter that Artaxerxes gave to the priest Ezra [43], the scribe, a scholar of the text of the commandments of the Lord and his statutes for Israel: (12) Artaxerxes, king of kings, to the priest Ezra, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven . . . etc. [Ezra 7:10–12].

This is their evidence from their holy scriptures that Ezra was inspired to write the Torah and the holy scriptures after they had been lost. As you see, it does not prove that. Rather, the utmost that may be said of him is that he was among the scribes of the religion or the revealed law, in the way that you might say a certain Companion was a "scribe of revelation." Thus, were we to assume that the Qur'an was lost to the Muslims and had not been persevered in the heart, and then allege that Mu'āwiyah was inspired to write it – because he is described in some books of religious history as having been a scribe of revelation – would the People of the Book accept this argument from us?

Furthermore, the historicity of King Artaxerxes – who gave this testimony for Ezra, the reason for which we do not know – is uncertain. It is inconsistent with the confused Old Testament reports in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra. Hence, it is not known whether he is Artaxerxes the First, namely Ardashir, who is known to the Persians as Zarathushtra, or whether he is Artaxerxes the Second.¹¹⁰ Ezra mentioning him after Darius would suggest that he is Artaxerxes the First, but history contradicts this. We will not explain this contradiction at length. Whoever is interested may consult the books of history and the encyclopedia's summary of it. The contradiction renders the report untrustworthy. Muslims would not

accept a report about their prophet, one with an uninterrupted chain of transmission close [to the prophet], were it to contain such a blatant contradiction as this. (p. 743. vol. 4.)

Article Ten: The Sinlessness of the Prophets and Salvation

It will not be in accordance with your desires, nor the desires of the People of the Scripture. He who doeth wrong will have the recompense thereof, and will not find against Allah any protecting friend or helper. And whoso doeth good works, whether of male or female, and he (or she) is a believer such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged the dint of a date-stone [4:123–124].

[44] In the previous section, we mentioned that we seek friendship and harmony, and that debates among the religions and legal schools are of little utility and are perhaps harmful, producing no benefit. This is because most people are blind followers of tradition – and how traditionalists neglect logical proof! We said that these Evangelical missionaries compelled us to reply to their misrepresentations by sending us books and newspapers attacking Muslim beliefs and importuning us to reply to them. Their importuning was combined with the requests of many Muslims who said that, other than *al-Manār*, no Islamic periodical in the region was published to serve the religion with sound knowledge. Hence, it was incumbent upon us to reply to the criticisms facing Islam. According to the decree of our religion, this importuning and requesting made replying to these books and newspapers an incumbent duty for us. In view of the law, we would sin were we not to reply.

"Whenever I treat a wound, another wound opens." Indeed, we had been replying to their last book, which had gathered together the substance of their criticisms.¹¹¹ Then behold: we received the periodical *The Glad Tidings of Peace* unsolicited and without prior correspondence. Then, in recent days, the Evangelical newspaper *The Standard of Zion* was sent to us. Upon it was written: "I request a reading of the article about the prophets' sinning and a reply to it."

The Gazelles so outnumber Khirāsh; that Khirāsh does not know what to hunt.¹¹²

[45] However, a few signs of truth suffice to destroy the majority of falsehood. Hence, we say (beginning with this article):

Muslims say that God sent many prophets to the world and the greatest of them are six. These are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus – namely Christ – and Muḥammad. Many state that all of these prophets were sinless and hence were capable of granting salvation to their followers. But had they been sinners that would not have been easy for them, since it is not possible for sinners to bestow salvation from sin on others.¹¹³

This is literally what he stated. He then follows this with the claim that, Christ apart, these prophets were disobedient sinners, drawing evidence from their stories in the Old Testament.

As for Adam's disobedience, it is well known. As for Noah, it is mentioned that he drank wine. The author acknowledges that no other sin of his is mentioned in the Torah. But he asserts that there is no doubt that he was a sinner. As for Abraham: "Indeed, it is related of him that he sinned twice, due to his fear of the people." As for Moses' sinning, the author states:

When God commanded him to go to Pharaoh he betrayed great fear and increasing cowardice, inducing God to become angry with him. And when the Israelites were in the wilderness after their exodus from the land of Egypt, Moses spoke incoherently once. Hence, due to this sin, God did not grant him the possibility of entering the land of Canaan, but caused him to die in the desert.

The author also seeks evidence for their sinning in the Glorious Qur'an, in that which is related in the verses concerning their seeking of forgiveness, except Christ, as this is not related about him. He concludes the article – after a long discussion praising Christ, prayer and peace be upon him – with the Muslim claim to have faith in him (whereas they are the

true believers in him) and their reliance on him for their salvation (whereas they rely on none save God alone). By "faith in him," he means the Protestant understanding of faith, as in a section on the first page of this edition he wrote that the other sects "are Christians in appearance, but not in truth," and that God will hurl them into the eternal fire. As for the rebuttal to the article, it may be made from several angles.

[46] One: the greatest of the prophets in the Muslim view are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad, prayer and peace be upon them, and they name them "prophets of resolve."¹¹⁴ Adam is not among them, as per the Almighty's statement, "and we found no resolve in him" [20:115].¹¹⁵ Among the ulama, some forbid declaring some prophets more virtuous than others, as this can only be known by revelation.¹¹⁶

Two: Muslims do not believe that it is the prophets who, because of their sinlessness, save the people from God's punishment and admit them to their standing in God's blessing. They rely but on God alone for that. They believe that salvation depends on true faith and sound action, and that the prophets were sent but as preachers and warners who teach the people the sound faith that is acceptable in God Almighty's view and the good action that pleases Him. Hence, whoever believes and acts soundly, salvation would be hoped for him through the bounty of God Almighty, who brings him success and guides him. Whoever disbelieves after the call to God and its stipulations reaches them, their disbelief increases for the sinners naught but loss.¹¹⁷

Three: these opponents were not cognizant of the meaning of the prophets' sinlessness, in the view of the Muslims, for they presumed that they state that so as to establish that the prophets save the people because they are sinless. We respond to them that in the Muslim view there arises a rational proof for that: God Almighty placed the prophets as guides and leaders so that they be emulated. Were He to tempt them with disobedience – which would violate the law that they bring – they would not have been worthy of being exemplars of guidance. This is because God set guidance by actions above guidance by speech in the human disposition. Indeed, the prophets informed us that God Almighty commanded that they be emulated. So had they violated His command, there would have been inconsistency and a command to commit evil in His command, which is impossible. The meaning of their sinlessness is not that that they differ from mankind in every degree, such that they not fear that which frightens in life, not feel pain from that which causes pain, and not be wary of evil (and we shall presently clarify the issue in dictated religious lessons).

Four: Nothing in the way of sin was reported about Noah in the Old Testament, except drinking wine, and it is reported in these gospels that Christ also drank wine. Thus, were we to state that whoever has not been reported to have disobeyed [47] is fit to be the people's savior, then that would befit Noah as it befits Christ. Moreover, there are among the virtuous in this Muhammadan nation many of whom no disobedience was observed.

Five: That which the author reports about Abraham makes clear that he needed and desired salvation from an evil and a sin greater than telling apparent lies that may be interpreted allegorically. Take, for example, Abraham saying of his wife, "This is my sister." This means "sister" in religion. In terms of rational and legal principle, if the two harms are contrasted, the sin of lying is necessarily the lesser of the two. If a sinner tried to rape your woman, to enslave or commit adultery with her, and you could save her from him by lying, doing so would be incumbent upon you. Then, you would be the lying and disobedient one in the picture, but in truth the obedient one following your obligation.

Six: That which the author mentions about Moses' fear does not involve disobeying God or violating His law. This is but a permissible human quality. It is the fear of reverence and veneration for the high office to which he was commanded.

Seven: If the rational evidence for the prophets' sinlessness was not correct, the absence of a report of Christ's disobedience does not preclude its occurrence, since the absence of something's existence does not, in itself, necessarily follow from an absence of knowledge about it.

Eight: That prophets seek God Almighty's forgiveness does not prove that they rebelled and violated God Almighty's religion after the call to prophethood. Rather, it proves that, due to their elevated knowledge of God and that which is mandatory in the way of His praise and glorification, they deem neglecting that which is best – should they do so on occasion – a sin and a deficiency.¹¹⁸ Did you not observe among those closest to the kings and sultans those who committed sins – without violating the positive law – for which they sought forgiveness from the kings? "And Allah's is the Sublime Similitude" [16:60].¹¹⁹ Further clarification of this is forthcoming in dictated religious lessons.

Nine: If we were to postulate that the Muslims' evidence for the prophets' sinlessness was unsound, then the Christians would have no argument against them. But that would cast doubt on ultimate religion. (p. 816. vol. 4.)

Article Eleven: The Muslim View of Fear and Hope; Defamation of the Companions and Successors on the Basis of this View

[48] In its fourth issue the evangelical periodical *The Glad Tidings of Peace* published a section attacking Muslims in general and the great noble Companions in particular. It faults them and their religion for their hope for God's blessing and fear of Him. This is the extent of these people's knowledge of God and God's religion. The periodical asserts: "Many

Muslims die on the carpet of hope in entering the garden and enjoying its blessings, based upon the magnanimous promises they have in their Qur'an." It then states: "What causes that but their ignorance of their true selves and the Almighty Creator's perfections?" Then, for clarification, it states that Muslims of knowledge and intelligence became extreme in devotion, worship, prayer and supplication to God Almighty. The periodical found the cause of this worship in their not having found that which would relieve their souls of the heavy burden of carrying their sins. It cited the result but not the cause when discussing fear of God on the part of Abū Bakr the Truthful,¹²⁰ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb and Sufyān al-Thawrī. And it counted Sufyān among the Companions when he is not among them.¹²¹ But knowledge is not a prerequisite for speech in these agitators' view. There is also distortion in the statement, but honesty is not a condition of reporting for these evangelists.

It is not for us to investigate its reporting, explaining corruptions and weaknesses of weak reports.¹²² In forgiveness we ignore that and the statements with which the writer offended decency in relation to these Imams, of whom mankind is proud. Were Muslims to believe the books known as the Bible, and were their religion to permit them to elevate anyone above the prophets, then history would provide for them that which would elevate these Imams over the Biblical prophets. This is because the like of that which people report about their prophets' cruelty, sinning, drunkenness, adultery and shedding of blood – God absolve them from what they say – was not reported of them. [49] We pass this over and explain their purpose in condemning fear and hope – the two bases of every sound religion – to

our readers. Their purpose is to establish a doctrinal principle that would sanction sins and evils – which are the primary object of their preaching – and attract people to their religion. This principle is that salvation from sin in the afterlife, and eternal life in the heavens, are only obtainable through the belief that God found no way to save mankind from the sin of his father Adam except by becoming incarnate in a human body, empowering over Himself a group that was the most superior of peoples, their crucifixion of Him, and His becoming cursed by the ruling of the divine law and shari'ah! Whoever extinguishes the light of his mind, ruins the natural disposition of his soul, and accepts this principle, is one saved, one who inherits the highest heavens, even if he kills, commits adultery, drinks alcohol, obtains the property of the people through deceit, treats worshippers unjustly, and is the bane of civilization. For this reason, the writer, who I can only characterize as a propagandist for this doctrine, explains that the reason for the fear of God of Abū Bakr, 'Alī and Sufyān is their ignorance of the principle of redemption. This means that had they known and believed it, they would have lived safe from God's stratagem and punishment, unrestrained and exulting in their desires and pleasures. The gist is that the Muslim who is subdued by hope for God's blessing and His promise to those who do good is ignorant and in error. The Muslim who fears God in awe and glorification – or because he suspects that he is deficient in performing the sound acts that benefit mankind, and in the knowledge and qualities that purify the soul – is ignorant and in error. The gist is that faith in God and His Angels, books and messengers – without making distinctions among them – disciplining of moral character and reform of actions: none of this benefits the truthful Muslim, nor avails him anything. What, then, is the condition of the miserable Muslim? As God Almighty afflicted him with purity of innate disposition and integrity of the light of the mind, he did not accept that principle, from which those raised under it freed themselves, following what they reasoned and discerned. Yet the scriptures of the people are not devoid of texts indicating that their messengers and saints feared God Almighty and hoped for His blessing. This is because they were not libertines, but an upright people.

The Wise Qur'an informs us that God Almighty's religion is one in essence and that all the prophets and the upright believers in them followed it. It is:

- The absolute unicity of God Almighty.
- His utter dissociation from the characteristics of [temporal] events.
- His assigning of worship as an obligation.
- Fear of the obstacle of sin and evils.
- The hope that leads to goodness and righteousness.

We see all wise Christians agreeing with us about this principle, and desiring that the missionaries and leaders of each religion be guided to it, so that religion be as God decreed it: a source of human happiness, not a curse and source of unhappiness, nor a stimulant of dispute, enmity and hatred among them.

Imam al-Ghazālī mentions many types of fear: fear of death before repentance, fear of revoking repentance and breaking commitment, fear of incapacity to fulfill obligations, fear of the disappearance of the heart's tenderness or that cruelty be substituted for it, fear of deviating from the straight path, fear of the overpowering force of custom in intensifying well-known desires, fear of being conceited with good deeds, fear of arrogance when blessed with many bounties, fear of being distracted from God by something other than God, fear of becoming careless through the ongoing of bounties, fear of uncovering negative consequences of acts of obedience through the appearance to a person of that which is unexpected, fear of his being burdened with others' sins through backbiting, fraudulent acts, deceit or the holding of grudges, fear of that which might suddenly befall him in the future, fear of calamity befalling, fear of being deceived by the ornaments of this world, fear of God uncovering the innermost thoughts in a moment of heedlessness¹²³ and fear of a bad ending. Other types of fear may be enumerated, while the most elevated fear is the fear of awe and veneration for God, to Him belong glory and power. All of this is sinning in the view of these evangelists. (p. 98. vol. 5.)

Article Twelve: Muslim Faith and Practice

[51] In the eighth issue of the periodical *The Glad Tidings of Peace* is a section with this title. It may be summarized as follows: in the Sunni school it is possible "that somebody has true faith in Islam while persisting in his evil actions." The writer makes two objections to this. The first:

That faith which does not instill repentance and sound practice in the believer, but abandons him when his evil tendencies outweigh his good tendencies and his losses surpass his gains . . . is a false faith devoid of benefit. It diminishes the Creator's generosity while intensifying the created creature's misery.

The second objection: "the incapacity of Muhammadan faith for complete salvation." Indeed, after the first objection the author cites verses from the Two Testaments, indicating that he desires perfection in the human being. But the verses cited do not demonstrate that the believer is immune from sin. After the second objection, he cites some verses proving that faith in Christ suffices for salvation. But he did not impose sound practice as a requirement of faith.

If these disputants believed that which they say, then their right guidance would be close at hand and their being convinced even nearer. But they express themselves awkwardly, twisting their tongues with the scripture in order to tempt the ignorant common Muslims with it, unconcerned should the statement be a proof against themselves. Their New Testament states that righteousness and acting by the divine law do not benefit an individual in any respect, but that faith in Christ alone suffices him, as thereby he is saved and inherits the kingdoms [of heaven], even if he be the most evil evildoer and shameless of libertines. The Qur'an barely mentions faith except when coupled with sound action, while it is related in the sound hadith that faith is speech with the tongue, belief in the heart, and action through the pillars.¹²⁴ This hadith is confirmed by

seventy-five Qur'anic verses, without counting the verses in which sound action is mentioned without faith.

[52] The Almighty states, "And lo! verily I am Forgiving toward him who repenteth and believeth and doth good, and afterward walketh aright" [20:82]. He to whom glory and power belong states:

It will not be in accordance with your desires nor the desires of the People of the Scripture. He who doth wrong will have the recompense thereof, and will not find against Allah any protecting friend or helper. And whoso doth good works, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged the dint in a date-stone [4:123–124].¹²⁵

He whose praise is sublime states:

They only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when the revelations of Allah are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord; Who establish worship and spend of that We have bestowed on them. Those are they who are in truth believers [8:2–4].

He whose names are blessed states:

By the declining day,
Lo! man is in a state of loss,
Save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance [103:1–3]. (See Article 4)

should precede the sermon. He remarked: this (practice) has been done away with. Upon this Abū Sa'īd remarked: this man has performed the duty prescribed on him. I heard Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) say: Whoever, among you, sees something abominable should rectify it with his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of Faith.

The tradition is found in all of the nine collections, except those of Dāramī and Mālik. See Muslim, Faith (*Īmān*), 70.

This short chapter is more inclusive of virtue and deeper in guidance than all the books in the world, heavenly or unheavenly, and suffices for an independent religion for people of understanding.

The net with which the writer and those like him trap the ignorant into accepting Christianity is that human salvation is limited to believing – that is, to state, even without understanding:

- That God is composed of three elements, each identical to the other two, so that the three are one.
- That one of the three, the son, became incarnate in a human body by means of another, the holy spirit. Thus, this human being became God, the son of God, a human being, and the son of a human being who became God.
- That He empowered His enemies over Himself, so that they could crucify Him. And He bore pain and the divine curse in order to save the people from the sin of their father Adam, and also their own sins, because He found no other way to bestow salvation upon His servants.

This writer, and those like him, do not require from those they call to their religion anything except this irrational statement, which does not motivate the soul to sound action, but rather encourages it towards every sin. The ignorant one would love that sins be permitted him and that he be saved by a spoken profession. If the Christian propagandists had seen fit to stipulate the relinquishment of sin and sound action as a condition of this profession that they call "faith," then what, apart from this irrational and incomprehensible profession, distinguishes their religion? Does he not realize that were he to call a Muslim to his religion, demanding of him relinquishment of sin and performance of good acts, he would be unable to entrap him, [53] however ignorant he may be? This is because he would say: "This imposes upon me the like of that which my religion imposes upon me, and places another burden upon me. This is belief in that which I find irrational and incomprehensible: namely, that one is three and three is one, and that God is incapable of saving the people without debasing

His high nature through being incarnate in one of them, feeling pain and cursing Himself.”

Muslims believe that faith refines and reforms dispositions through acts. Yet it is nevertheless possible that the believer’s lust or desire take hold of him so that he commit evil, especially if he were not raised under the acts of faith from childhood. But he would quickly return and repent. The Almighty states, “Lo! those who ward off (evil), when a glamour from the devil troubleth them, they do but remember (Allah’s guidance) and behold them seers!” [7:201]. The Lord states, “Forgiveness is only incumbent on Allah toward those who do evil in ignorance (and) then turn quickly (in repentance) to Allah. These are they toward whom Allah relenteth” [4:17]. On repentance, He states that he who performs good works thereby erases his sins: “Lo! good deeds annul ill deeds” [11:114]. Thus, if he falls short, he is under God’s will.

From what we have summarized, then, it is clear that in the Muslim view faith produces sound action, while acts are of no value in Christian faith. As for *The Glad Tidings of Peace’s* statement on the upshot of the first objection, it is:

On the basis of that stated above, every faith that does not have perfection as its objective and piety as its benefit is either a false faith in the true God, as that of Christians and Jews in name only, or it is a true faith, but in a false and imaginary god based on delusion.

Which is that of the Muslim. The periodical was correct in that which it wrote about Christian faith, and that was not its standard practice, as their faith is nothing but professed names and statements going no further than the mouth, as reason renders them false and is unable to conceive of them. As for its subsequent statement, which is:

I assume that you did not forget to mention the people who are recognized as Muslims by agreement, in spite of being disobedient and sinful people, such that it is decreed that they be imprisoned in the fire for a period not less than nine hundred years and not more than seven thousand years, *et cetera*.

The specification is incorrect. It has no basis in the Qur’an or hadith and

is unimportant in the Muslim view, although it is mentioned in some books: how many books of fabricated hadiths and false statements!¹²⁶ We have no proof beyond that which is related in the Generous Qur’an and sound hadith. [54] As for the writers’ discussion on matters of the afterlife, that which was not reported in the Qur’an and *mutawātir* hadith – which are very few in number – is not required for faith in what concerns the hidden world.¹²⁷ This is what we have stated. It is the principle Muslims rely upon.

As for the Almighty’s statement, “There is not one of you but shall approach it [i.e., the hellfire]” [19:71], it is not, as the author claims, addressed to Muslims. This is because all of the verses prior to it concern unbelievers.¹²⁸ Hence, it is said it is addressed specifically to them. It is also said that it is addressed to the people in general. The intended meaning is that the believers arrive at that time, and pass alongside and kneel in front of the hellfire before entering the garden. Thereby, in entering the garden, they appreciate the degree of God Almighty’s blessing upon them.

Two statements: I conclude this response with two statements. The first is for those Muslims who send us these newspapers, seeking our response to them. Do not be saddened by this aggression to which you are unaccustomed, O Muslims. Do not consider it among the evils of the freedom of the

press. It is among its benefits. This is because this aggression, through attacking your religion, awakens you from your sleep. It instills in you the desire to research and seek evidence, and enlivens the spirit of group pride and competition among peoples. Thus, you may come to know your religion's truths through logical proof and evidence. And research does not add to the truth, other than in making it more apparent.

The second statement is for the Christian opponents who call themselves evangelists: we believe that you attack the religion of Islam – if not for which no religion would be proven in this enlightened age – for payment, not out of belief in the truth of that which you say and write. Hence, one of you forsook evangelism when he was fired from the [missionary] society and his salary was withheld. Were you to believe in the religion, you would know that God's religion is one: the Creator's dissociation; His divine oneness; sincerity in His worship; relinquishment of evil; righteous acts; and bringing benefit to His servants. You would see that Islam served humanity with this corrective reform, that it is the religion of all the prophets – manifest in the most fully developed form – that released the People of the Book from disputation and difficulties. But desire diverted you from this. So “act according to your power. Lo! We (too) are acting. And wait! Lo! we (too) are waiting” [11:121–122].¹²⁹ (p. 436. vol. 5.)

Article Thirteen: The Glad Tidings of Peace's Absurd Treatment of Islam and the Jāhiliyyah

[55] In its ninth issue, *The Glad Tidings of Peace* published a section on Islam and the *jāhiliyyah* claiming that, in doctrine and practice, Islam is inferior to pagan Arab society. Indeed, it discusses this at great length in a discussion of Islam's greatest pillar of faith, God Almighty's oneness. It claims that Islam increased the paganism of pagan Arab society! It argues that case in six points:

(1) The fact that faith in Muḥammad is imposed after faith in God Almighty. It deems this polytheism, when it is nothing but faith in revelation and God's messengers. In the Muslim view, whoever denies the prophecy of Moses or Jesus is an unbeliever, as is one who denies the prophecy of Muḥammad, prayer and peace be upon them. So it is apparent that in the view of the evangelist author faith in revelation is polytheism and paganism. His assertion about the joining of the two names in the two testimonies does not add weight to the criticism, as the form of the testimony related in *The Two Sound Collections*¹³⁰ is: “I testify that there is no God but God alone; He has no partner. I testify that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger.” Is, then, the servant a Lord and god? As for joining the names in the spoken or written testimony, this is not prohibited, except when mentioning God Almighty is withheld and withdrawn entirely. Does the writer not say “God bless so-and-so” and such things? The writer finds intolerable a statement in certain Muslim books: the two testimonies of the confession of faith were inscribed on the throne before the creation of the heavens and earth. In this form, the statement is not Islamic doctrine. Thus, for whoever lives and dies without hearing it, or hears it but does not believe that it is related in the hadith at all, neither the former nor the latter would be considered a destruction or diminution of his faith. And if we stated that this inscription was proven and sound, then where is the paganism therein? God is God and the servant is the servant. Yes, this does indeed indicate honoring [Muḥammad]. Would the writer assert that all God's servants are equal in knowledge, worship of God, and bringing benefit to His creation, and that honoring one of them and deeming him superior to another constitutes polytheism? Would he assert that pure monotheism be that the evangelist believe that Moses is like Pharaoh and Abraham is like Nimrod, there being no

difference between them? This is the Christian missionaries' understanding of religion and this is that which they detest in the Muslims. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.

(2) [56] The author asserts that Muslims grant the hadith the status of the Qur'an, deeming them equivalent for deriving rulings, in spite of their belief that the Qur'an is God's speech while the hadith is Muḥammad's speech. He asserts that the Shi'ah abandoned the hadith, thus angering the Sunnis. Both claims are false. Sunnis do not state that the Qur'an and hadith are equivalent, while the Shi'ah did not reject the hadith. The Qur'an is the fundamental basis of the religion, while the sunnah elaborates it. The Almighty states, "We have revealed unto thee the Remembrance that thou mayest explain to mankind that which hath been revealed for them" [16:44]. The Qur'an has special characteristics and advantages that the sunnah lacks, such as the necessity of belief in all of that which is in it and worship being performed through its recitation.

As for the hadith, faith is not harmed by the rejection of any particular hadith (and whoever is of the view that something has been transmitted broadly and without interruption is not permitted to reject it, even if it is not a hadith, but the *mutawātir* hadith does not apply here).¹³¹ The hadith is divided into sections, and the acceptance of that in it pertaining to matters of temporal life is not mandatory – it is possible that it be

erroneous, as seen in the sound hadith on the pollination of date palms. In it the Prophet, God's blessing and peace be upon him, states, "You are more knowledgeable in the affairs of your lives."¹³² As for that which pertains to the matter of religion, it derives either from independent reasoning or from revelation. As for the prophets' independent reasoning, the Sunni ulama allowed that there be error in it, but not that they would remain upon an error. Rather, they receive revelation explaining the truth concerning it, as happened in the case of the captives at Badr. As for that which the prophets state from God's revelation, this must be accepted. Muslims distinguish between the Qur'an and revelation that the prophet expressed in his own words, which Muslims call a report and hadith of what happened. Hence, if there is irreconcilable contradiction between the two, the Qur'an is to be acted upon, not the hadith.¹³³

It is impossible, therefore, that the sound hadith, being second in rank,

is equivalent to the Qur'an. Thus, the prophet, God's blessing and peace be upon him, asked of Ma'adh [ibn Jabal] when sending him to Yemen, "by what will you judge?" Ma'adh replied, "By the book of God and if [the ruling] is not found [therein], by the sunnah."¹³⁴ The prophet approved of his answer. The same is related of Abū Bakr, 'Umar and other Imams of the religion, namely, that they first examined the Qur'an, and applied the ruling they sought if they found it therein. Otherwise, they investigated the sunnah, acting upon it. So let the Muslims see how the Christians invent the religion's fundamentals (*uṣūl*) for them, building upon them their accusation of clear polytheism. So this is their bigotry, while this is our tolerance. Thanks be to God, Lord of the worlds.

(3) [57] He states: "The third point is the mentioning of Muḥammad's name together with God's name in numerous places in the Qur'an, which is equivalent to assigning Him a partner in commanding and forbidding, loosening and tying¹³⁵ and the requirement of obeying and loving Him." *Et cetera*. The writer states that he provides evidence solely from chapter [nine] of the Qur'an, entitled "Repentance" (*Sūrat al-Taubah*). However, he cites three verses: two from "Repentance" and one from [chapter thirty three], "The Parties" (*al-Aḥzāb*). Indeed, he corrupts the two verses, while putting them between brackets to indicate direct quotation.

He writes: "Allah is free from that which they associate, and so is His messenger." In contrast, God Almighty states: "Allah is free from obligation to the associators, and (so is) His messenger" [9:3].¹³⁶ He writes:

"And it becometh not a believing man or (*aw*) a believing woman" etc., while God Almighty states, "And it becometh not a believing man or (*wa lā*) a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decided an affair" [33:36].¹³⁷

As for the response to the criticism, it is clear: God Almighty's rulings were acquired from His messenger. Thus, in the matter of religion, all that the messenger ruled reached him from God Almighty. Its attribution to Him is [therefore] sound, as the attribution of natural events to their causes is sound, since God Almighty linked them together. In this, there is nothing that may be called polytheism. It is as if the writer states that his religion charges with polytheism he who would say, "It befits mankind to be ashamed before God and people," or some such statement, as he combines the name of the people with the name of God in a single precept.

So let the Muslims see the Christian missionaries' "honesty" in reporting and contrast what the author wrote – corrupting Qur'anic verses and making erroneous ascription to the chapter – with what happened to us with one of the great ulama. He alerted us to the obligation of calling attention to an error that occurred when the Gospel was quoted in *al-Manār*: *lam tujarribūnanī* (you did not test me) was published as *lam tujarribūnī*, the "protecting *nūn*" being omitted from the verb.¹³⁸ Let those

This verse is often cited to emphasize the importance of the declension of the noun, "His messenger" (*rasūluhu*) being in the nominative case; otherwise, the verse would read: "Allah is free from obligation to the associators and to His messenger," which is significantly different.

who are just reflect on our reporting from the people and their reporting from us, to distinguish the truthful from those who lie and separate the tolerant from the zealots. Thanks be to God, Lord of the worlds.

(4) He states: "The fourth point is Muslims taking Muḥammad as their master." He then derives from this that Muslims believe that they are Muḥammad's servants and states that this is the polytheism with which he is concerned. The rebuttal to this point is that Muslims did not mandate that anyone say "our master" when mentioning the prophet. This characterization of him, prayer and peace be upon him, is not related in Qur'an or sunnah. Indeed, [58] some ulama considered adding the words "our master" to the *salat* (*ṣalāh*) – appending the statement "there is no God but God" – reprehensible. Some said it was recommended, as this is one of the titles of reverence people are accustomed to using for eminent individuals and equals.¹³⁹ It is peculiar that the writer finds evidence for this form of address – which, in his view, entails polytheism – in the verse: "Lo! Allah and His angels *make salat* (*ṣalāh*) over the Prophet" [33:56].¹⁴⁰ This is because prayer (*ṣalāh*) from God is blessing, while prayer from other than God is supplication (*du'ā'*), as the ulama have made clear.¹⁴¹ Thus, were every individual for whom we seek blessing a god of ours, and every individual we address as "master" a god of ours, then we and the writer would have innumerable gods! Yes, indeed, Muslims believe that Muḥammad is the most superior of the prophets and messengers. They give voice to that through the honorific title, as the prophets are the most superior of

Adam's children. Hence, he is the most superior and the master of Adam's children. But they are not his servants. As for the reason for his being held in high estimation, it is clear from his influence. Indeed, we have written on this, and will write on this, God willing. So let those who reflect reflect on the artifice of these Christian evangelists and their fabrications, which amuse the sad. Thanks be to God, Lord of the worlds.

(5) He states, "The fifth point is Muslim extremeness concerning Muḥammad's pre-existence, to the point that they state that he is the eternal light, pre-existing humanity" *et cetera*. We say: this extremeness is not in any way derived from the religion. Thus, it is not found in the Qur'an, books of sound hadith, or books of doctrine. It is only found in the books of stories and births that deserve no respect, and the religion forbids speaking without knowledge. However, the common folk, among whom this exaggeration circulates, do not dispute the temporal existence of their and other prophets. Thus, it would be unsound to label one who professes that as somehow a polytheist.¹⁴² So let those who perceive, perceive the extent of these people's knowledge of the religions that they declare false and in need of their people's rejection. Let them produce for us a Muslim who speaks as they do, without knowledge and attacks them through making claims and then judgments. It suffices us to be among the Muslims. Thanks be to God, Lord of the worlds.

(6) He states, "The sixth and final point is Muslims taking Muḥammad as an intercessor." He then states, "Taking a created being as an intercessor with God is identical to pre-Islamic Arab polytheism, not more, not less." He then states that the pre-Islamic adoption of numerous intercessors is less polytheistic than the Muslim limitation of intercession to [59] a

single intercessor – although the Muslims did not limit it. The response: in the Muslim view, intercession is supplication. Hence, Muslims say in the prayer over a dead person: “We come to You as intercessors for him. O God, if he were a doer of good acts, then increase his goodness”¹⁴³ *et cetera*. Hence, every Muslim is an intercessor and, moreover, every believer in God who calls on God Almighty for himself and others. Supplication for others is called intercession. It is as though the evangelist writer states that his religion charges with polytheism anyone who mentions one who has died, such as his father or someone else, saying, “God Almighty have mercy upon him.” So, thus does “the religion of tolerance” proceed: its people pronouncing fatwas upon opponents. If they should respond with the truth, they call them fanatics. But this need not dislodge us from the tolerance of the Muslims. Thanks be to God, Lord of the worlds.

If you are amazed, the statement of those who take their prophet as a god is indeed amazing, namely that those who state that their prophet is God’s servant, but that he is the most superior of His servants because he grants His created beings the most superior benefits and guides them, if He wills, with the most complete guidance, are those who associate God with another. This is because they recognize their prophet’s virtue, ask for God Almighty’s mercy upon him and obey him in that which he brings from God Almighty!

After setting forth the above, the author states:

Against that is rebutted our adoption – we, the Christians – of Christ as the sole intercessor between God and people, based upon that which is related in the gospel. I answer: if we had believed that Christ was created (thus) and took him as the sole intercessor, or he and others with him, we would without doubt be polytheists. But if Christ was in truth the eternal word of God – “He is the Creator and not the created. All things came into being through Him and without Him not one thing came into being[”]¹⁴⁴ – then we are not polytheists. Rather, we worship the one God, His name be blessed!

This means that polytheism is the [Muslim] people’s belief that their prophet is God’s servant and that his intercession is supplication to God. It means that pure monotheism is the people’s belief that their prophet, who was born 1902 years ago, is God, the Pre-existent, the Eternal, the Creator of all things before and after him, that he is the intercessor, namely that he is an intermediary between the people and himself, they crucifying and cursing him for their salvation! Excellent! How good is this monotheism! These are the Christian reformers’ criticisms. To God be thanks and blessing that He made us Muslims and peace be upon the messengers. Thanks be to God, Lord of the worlds. (p. 517. vol. 5.)

*Article Fourteen: Response to the Periodical al-Jāmi‘ah’s*¹⁴⁵

Attacks on Islam

[Some of those who are Jews] change words from their context and they say: “We hear and disobey; hear thou as one who heareth not” and “Listen to us!” distorting with their tongues and slandering religion. If they had said “We hear and we obey; hear thou, and look at us” it had been better for them, and more upright. [But Allah hath cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not, save a few] [4:46].

[60] Verily, *al-Manār*'s readers know that we did not open this door to attack the religion of Christianity, or any other, in the first instance. We opened it only to respond to their criticisms, criticisms that might lead one ignorant of Islam to doubt the religion absolutely and ruin his moral character. That would be a disaster for him and for the people. The attacks of those who attack Islam have no purpose but this planting of doubt, which loosens the Islamic ties and weakens the Muslims. This is because it dispossesses them of their character as an ummah, so that they become divided individuals, lacking group solidarity and religion. Were they aiming at converting the Muslims to Christianity, we could to some extent excuse them. But experience informs history that millions of Christians became Muslims, while not one Muslim convert to Christianity stands facing each of these millions, except individuals for whom Islam was merely the name inherited from their forefathers.

The famous sage Master Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (God Almighty have mercy upon him) was asked: what underlies the call to the Dahri school in India? Why is mission not limited to Christian mission? He replied: it is impossible that a Muslim would convert to Christianity, as Islam is Christianity and more. It commands belief in Jesus' prophecy and the truth of his mission, while rejecting the myths and innovations that the Christian groups added to his religion. So, when those who aimed at loosening the Islamic ties tried Christian mission and did not succeed in that, they shifted their strategy to sowing doubts about the fundamental basis of ultimate religion through calling people to the Dahriyyah.¹⁴⁶

[61] Likewise, when the like of *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor saw that the evangelists' planting of doubts through Christianity did not succeed with the Muslims with the religious method, he, like them, embarked upon planting doubts with the scientific method. He exerted his effort to convince them: (1) that their religion, like other religions, is the enemy of reason and knowledge, (2) that their Imams in doctrine (the scholastic theologians) denied causes and (3) that combining religious and civil political authority in the office of the caliph harms Muslims, causing their social retardation. In the opinion of *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor, if the Muslims wish to become sophisticated and successful, they must listen to his advice. That is, they must:

(1) Set their religion apart from reason and knowledge, as these would complete its destruction, as they completed the destruction of Christianity. So, if they attempt to combine religion and knowledge – as some of their Imams have advised them in *al-Manār* and other publications – they would

“those who profess the *dahr*.” Al-Ghazālī and al-Shahrastānī include Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī among the Dahriyyah, while Ibn Rushd does not name them, mentioning them only in connection with al-Ghazālī's critique of their positions.

The modern period brought greater definition to the term, the influence of European natural science having led to the growth of a variety of materialistic doctrines in the Islamic world. This was particularly the case in India and hence al-Afghānī's reference to events there. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, for example, was influenced by the notion of taking natural laws as criteria for religious values. This concept spread to the extent that it became known as a new religion, officially listed as *Necari* in the *Census of India*. In 1878, when in Hyderabad (living under the close scrutiny of the colonial authorities), al-Afghānī wrote a refutation of its doctrines in Persian that was translated into Arabic by 'Abduh in 1885, under the title *Refutation of the Teachings of the Dahriyyah and Explanation of their Depravity and Proof that Religion is the Foundation of Civilization while Unbelief is the Ruination of Culture* (Risālah fī ibtāl madhhab al-dahriyyīn wa bayān mafāsidihi wa ithbāt anna al-dīn asās al-madaniyyah wa al-kufr fasād al-'umrān). A second edition was published in 1902 under the title *Refutation of the Dahriyyah* (Radd 'alā al-Dahriyyah). Al-Afghānī argues that only religion can guarantee the stability of society, contrasting it with the destructive effects of materialistic atheism. He traces the evolution of his opponents' beliefs from ancient Greece through Voltaire and Rousseau to Darwin. I. Goldziher, “Dahriyya” in *El*.

only be attempting the impossible and, moreover, destroying their religion, such that they be left without both knowledge and religion.

(2) Believe that God Almighty's ways with causes and effects flow uninterruptedly as a matter of fact, in contrast to that which religion and the scholars of theology determine. Hence, if they believe in reality it is incumbent upon them to disbelieve their Imams and vice versa.

(3) Install their caliph as a secular ruler who devises laws and precepts, relinquishing that legislated by God for that legislated by the sultan, rendering their religion exclusively a matter of worshiping God Almighty.

That is, in the opinion of *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor Muslims must abandon half of their religion, the precepts of worldly transactions, and make the other half accord with the wishes of one who desires that reason, knowledge and causes be relinquished for the sake of worship.

This is the substance of the periodical *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor's advice to the Muslims. In order to make it acceptable, he cites for them statements from certain of their Imams, distorting their meaning to deceive the simple-minded.

We explain these issues, and clarify the truth about them, that there be an argument against these aggressors who "would put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, however much the disbelievers are averse" [61:8].

Causes or God Almighty's Ways in Creation (and Imam al-Ghazālī's Proof of them)

[62] In a text he fabricated, *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor states that we cited the Almighty's statement, "thou wilt not find for the way of Allah aught of power to change" [33:62; 48:23], to prove that natural laws neither change nor are altered. He then states:

Although, were *Hujjat al-Islām* Imam al-Ghazālī to be raised from his grave and hear this statement, he would break the pen of that periodical's editor and laugh at his simple-mindedness and unfamiliarity with the matters he investigates, as he cites that verse for the purpose he mentions, notwithstanding that it was not in any respect related in the Qur'an in relation to this matter.

This editor of *al-Jāmi'ah* speaks in preparation for deceiving the Muslims that that in which he arbitrarily proceeds – making judgments through interpreting God's book with his poor opinion – is acquired from Imam al-Ghazālī. He distorts the context of al-Ghazālī's words, not understanding their intent.

If al-Ghazālī would be amused at the "simplemindedness" of one who derived most of his knowledge of religion from his book *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn*), in belief and action, studying it time after time from his early youth – as he studied all that he examined of his books – with concentration and sincerity, then would he laugh or cry at the composition of the stubborn infidel who searches his discourse for a statement that he can distort contextually, so as to deceive the Muslims with something that contradicts their religion, something "vindicated" by the discourse of one of their Imams, when the argument lacks a supporting passage? We leave the like of this behind and present al-Ghazālī's teaching on causes and God Almighty's ways. We explain the truth concerning the matter of these two points, the understanding of which is obscure to many people, such that planting doubts about it among the common Muslims became easy for the like of *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor. This is because among them there remain those who read what he writes, in keeping with the Islamic principle of open-mindedness.

The teaching of al-Ghazālī: *Hujjat al-Islām* states in the third chapter of *The Book on Trusting in God* (*Kitāb al-Tawakkul*):¹⁴⁷

[On obtaining what is beneficial for single persons]

We say that there are three degrees of means by which one obtains what is beneficial: [a] those that are always reliable, [b] those that are presumed to

work, with a presumption in which one is confident, and [c] those which one imagines might work, but a fantasy in which the soul is cannot confide itself with complete confidence nor can be at peace with it. The first degree [63]: means that are always reliable. These are those in which other means following after them are arranged according to the planning of God and His will in an uninterrupted and invariant order. This is like having a meal put before you when you are hungry and need it, yet you did not lift a finger to prepare it, so you say: "I am one who trusts in God, and the condition of such trust is renouncing effort. Lifting a hand to do it would be effort and action, like chewing it with the teeth and swallowing it, in accordance with the palate being higher than the digestive organs." But this is pure idiocy and has nothing to do with trust in divine providence. If you were to wait for God most high to create satiety in you without bread, or to create in bread a motion towards you, or you enjoin an angel to chew it for you and send it to your stomach – that would simply display your ignorance of the practice [*sunna*] of God Most High. As would your not sowing seed in the ground yet hoping that God Most High would create plants without seeds, or thinking that your wives would give birth without intercourse, as Mary – praise be to her – gave birth. All of that is idiocy, yet stories of this sort abound to the point that it would be impossible to count them.¹⁴⁶

After determining that trust in God is not achieved in this degree through the relinquishment of action, he discusses the second degree, namely that

hadith and Qur'anic exegesis, and by al-Ghazālī's time was considered one of the pillars of faith. *Tawakkul* is a foundational concept in Sufi discourse, where it is expressed as a religion of "absolute dependence," as an attitude of inner spiritual orientation rather than external practice, as one of the degrees of *tawhīd* revealed through the science of mystical unveiling, and as reliance solely on God's providence for sustenance. The doctrine was sometimes taken to extremes, as exemplified by the reputed case of Abū Ḥamza al-Khurāsānī, who fell into a pit and refused to be rescued by a party of travelers; "relying upon God alone." Al-Ghazālī, as in the excerpts Riḍā quotes here, rejected such literalistic interpretations as naïve. In this respect, he was followed by the Sufi majority. For a detailed discussion of *tawakkul* in Islamic discourse, see L. Lewisohn, "Tawakkul" in *EI*. For analysis of al-Ghazālī's interpretation, see David Burrell, translation *On Faith in Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence: Kitāb at-tawhīd wa tawakkul*, (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2001).

in which a cause is presumed. He explains that trust in God is not achieved in this degree either:

So the renunciation of all means is contrary to His wisdom, and amounts to ignorance with respect to God Most High, whereas acting according to the necessities of the practice [*sunna*] of God Most High, while placing one's trust in God – Great and Glorious – and not in means, is not inconsistent with trusting in divine providence.¹⁴⁹

This detailing concerns the procurement of benefits, and he cites its equivalent for their preclusion and for the avoidance of harmful things whose causes are definite or presumed. He explains that trust in God, however, is the avoidance of things of imaginary benefit, such as incantations, omens, and cauterizing, which are discussed in the hadith. Among that which he explains here through reference to the divine *sunnah* is the following:

Similarly for means employed to protect one's property: it does not diminish trust in God to secure the door to one's home when one goes out, or to hobble a camel, for these means are known to be part of the *sunna* of God Most High, whether they be effective or probable means.¹⁵⁰

He then cites proofs of this from the Qur'an and *sunnah*. These are well known.

In the discussion on medicine, which falls under the avoidance of harms, he gives the following beautiful statement: "It can hardly belong to trusting in God to dispense with the *sunna* of the One in whom we trust!"¹⁵¹ He states, of the prophet's use of medicine, God's blessing and peace be upon him: "he would not forego having recourse to treatment in accordance with the *sunna* of God Most High, thereby letting his community feel their need."¹⁵²

[64] Clearer than this is the following statement, after a long explanation of causes:

In this way it is made clear that the One who makes causes to be causes carries out His *sunna* by linking whatever is caused to their direct causes as a demonstration of divine wisdom. So it is that treatments are causes subservient to the authority of God Most High, like all other means. Just as bread is a treatment for hunger and water for thirst, so oxymel is a treatment for jaundice and scammony for diarrhea – yet with two qualifications. First, the remedy for hunger and thirst by bread and water is clear and manifest in and perceived by everyone, while the remedy for jaundice by oxymel is known only to a few specialists, yet whoever becomes aware of the second kind [of connection] by experience links it, so far as he is concerned, with the first. Second, the fact that treatments purge – that oxymel can suppress jaundice – is a function of other conditions in the body and causes in conjunction, and it is often difficult to be apprised of all such conditions. It may be that one or other missing condition will keep the treatment from purging. With regard to quenching thirst, however, that does not require many conditions other than water, though there could be certain obstacles whose presence assured the malady of thirst no matter how much water one drank – but that is rare. In any case, the failure of causes can be restricted to these two factors. What is caused follows the cause without exception once the conditions of the cause have been fulfilled.¹⁵³

What text on the inseparability of causes and effects is stronger than this last statement? [Yet] *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor deceives the [common] Muslims that this Imam al-Ghazālī denied causes, and denied that the meaning of God's *sunnah* – that neither changes nor is transformed – is causes and their linkage to effects. After this, then, is confidence in the statements of *al-Jāmi'ah*'s editor or the goodness of his intentions possible? Is it permissible for someone other than a firmly established scholar to examine the

sunna of God Most High, thereby letting his community feel their need – especially since there is no harm in having recourse to treatment, by contrast with storing up possessions, which is very harmful. Author's emphasis.

writings of this planter of doubts, who seeks to alienate the common Muslims from their doctrines?

Reconciling this with what al-Ghazālī States in The Incoherence of the Philosophers

The explanation of causes given by Imam al-Ghazālī in *The Book on Divine Oneness and Trusting in God* is that believed by Muslims. He wrote it in this book to explain for Muslims the station of trust in God, which is the highest station of faith, while he has another discussion on this matter, with the philosophers, not the Muslims. It is necessary that his discussion there be spoken in language differing from that with which he addresses the Muslims, but not contradicting it. This is because here he explains the reality that is proven by existence and with which the revealed law is in explicit agreement, while there [65] he discusses causes and true effects with regard to creation and destruction. That which he states in the two passages is the unavoidable truth, as we explain.

Before delving into the second part, a statement preparing the subject is necessary: those among the early philosophers who were mistaken took apparent common causes for definite logical causes. They attributed effects to them, asserting the existence of an uninterrupted and essential linkage – the severing of which is impossible – between the two. Had a strong proof of that arisen for them, Muslims would not have opposed them, as the agreed upon principle in the view of the scholastic theologians, is that God Almighty's power and will do not concern what is impossible, but only what is possible. Yet for that they had no proof, only fallacious arguments from which al-Ghazālī and others removed the veil. Those causes – of which the opinion concerning their uninterrupted linkage was given – are [not necessary, but] possible, and linked [with effects] through God Almighty's action.

Had people accepted the opinion of those philosophers, the development of knowledge would have stopped at those apparent [causes], whose alteration they had considered logically impossible. There is, however, only one logical impossibility: the agreement of two opposites, or two contrasts equivalent to two opposites, or their mutual elimination. Had

the marvels unveiled by science in our time been mentioned to those incapable philosophers, they would have deemed them impossible, relating speculative specious arguments about that, such as what they related on the doctrine of bodily resurrection, whereas examples of bodily resurrection are clearly and completely apparent today to the scientists of chemistry.

Imam al-Ghazālī states in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* [The Natural Sciences: Introduction]:

This is what we wished to mention on the science, which, in their view, is called “theological.” [1] Regarding what are called “the natural sciences,” these consist of many sciences whose divisions we will [now] mention so that it would be known that the religious law does not require disputing (*munāzaʿ*) them nor denying (*inkār*) them, except in places [we will mention].¹⁵⁴

I draw the reader’s attention to his linking of “denying” with “disputing” in order to contrast them. “Denying” something is to deem it absolutely false, while “disputing” it is to discuss its evidence, to thereby manifest the truth, deriving from two individuals “disputing” over a garment. Then, after enumerating the types of natural science known in his time, the Imam states:

[18 There is no necessity to oppose them in terms of the revealed law in any of these sciences. 19] We only oppose them in these sciences with respect to four questions. The first is their judgment that [66] this connection between causes and effects that one observes in existence is a connection of necessary concomitance, so that it is with neither [the realm of] power nor within [that of] possibility to bring about the cause without the effect or the effect without a cause.¹⁵⁵

The effect of this dispute is apparent in all the natural sciences. He then states:

[23] The contention¹⁵⁶ over the first [theory] is necessary inasmuch as [on its refutation] rests the affirmation of miracles that disrupt [the] habitual [course of nature], such as changing the staff into a serpent, revival of the dead, and the splitting of the moon. Whoever renders the habitual courses [of nature] a necessary constant makes all these [miracles] impossible. [The philosophers] have thus interpreted what is said in the Qur’an about the revivification of the dead metaphorically, saying that what is meant by it is the removal of the death of ignorance through the life of knowledge. They interpreted [metaphorically] the staff devouring the magic of the magicians, [thereby] negating the divine proof manifest at the hand of Moses – [this] being the doubts of those who deny.¹⁵⁷ As regards the splitting of the moon, they often deny the existence [of its occurrence] and claim that there has been no soundly transmitted, indubitable reporting of it.¹⁵⁸

Al-Ghazālī critiques this theory and then discusses another that “allows natural things to cause each other, while at the same time allowing the occurrence of miracles rejected by the philosophers.” In Marmura’s view, the second theory is introduced “simply for the sake of argument.” Marmura, 241. See M.E. Marmura, “Al-Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection and Causality in the *Tahāfut* and the *Iqtisād*,” *Aligarh Journal of Islamic Thought* 2 (1989): 46–75, esp. 59 onwards, and Marmura’s introduction to his translation of the *Tahāfut*.

So may seekers of truth see the distortion of the Christian *al-Jāmi'ah's* editor as they are. The Imam states: "The dispute over the first [theory] is necessary inasmuch as [on its refutation] rests the affirmation of miracles that disrupt [the] habitual [course of nature]." This means that the object of the dispute in the first theory is the denial of the affirmation of miracles through their inclusion in the category of logical impossibilities, whose existence is impossible and with which God's power is not concerned. *Al-Jāmi'ah's* editor states the following from this Imam's tongue: "Then he states, 'denial of this opinion is incumbent upon us, as it denies the affirmation of miracles.' " Thus, he substitutes "denial" for "dispute" (*nizā'*), adding to it that his substitution is necessary. We explained the difference between denial and dispute previously. If the editor of *al-Jāmi'ah's* reporting from Ranān and others is of this nature in terms of its comprehension and honesty, then we "congratulate" whoever reads [and believes] that which he wrote for his knowledge being identical to ignorance and his right guidance the same error.

Then, in explaining the truth about the issue in terms of the knowledge that supports that which Muslims believe, Imam al-Ghazālī states:

[Seventeenth] Discussion: [On Causality and Miracles]: The connection between what is habitually believed to be a cause and what is habitually believed to be an effect is not necessary, according to us. But [with] any two things, where "this" is not "that" and "that" is not "this,"¹⁵⁹ and where neither the affirmation of the one entails the affirmation of the other nor the negation of one entails the negation of the other,¹⁶⁰ it is not a necessity of the existence of the one that the other should exist, and it is not a necessity

of the nonexistence of the one that the other should not exist – for example, the quenching of thirst and drinking, [67] satiety and eating, burning and contact with fire, light and the appearance of the sun, death and decapitation, healing and the drinking of medicine, the purging of the bowels and the using of a purgative, and so on to [include] all [that is] observable among connected things in medicine, astronomy, arts, and crafts. Their connection is due to the prior decree of God, who creates them side by side,¹⁶¹ not to its being necessary in itself, incapable of separation. On the contrary, it is within [divine] power to create satiety without eating, to create death without decapitation, to continue life after decapitation, and so on to all connected things. The philosophers denied the possibility of [this] and claimed it to be impossible.¹⁶²

He then gives a clear example of this that does not need mention.

That which Imam al-Ghazālī states here is agreed upon by the philosophers of this age, as they do not assert that any of these connections, generally known as causes and effects, are absolute logical necessities, whose severing is an impossibility of which the mind cannot conceive. On the contrary, in their view all of these things are [merely] possible, while the severing of the "inseparability" occurs often. They call that lacking a known cause "supernatural phenomena," while some severings were effected through the scientific unveiling of secrets of the universe. And, on the basis of these discoveries, they anticipate that which has yet to occur, such as the revival of dead persons, whereas they would not anticipate it were it impossible in their view. But *al-Jāmi'ah's* editor does not distinguish the necessary from the possible. Thus, he confuses certain matters with others. Al-Ghazālī explains in that stated above that two logically inseparable things – inseparable in the one being affirmed by the other's affirmation and denied by its denial – are two things whose

inseparability cannot possibly be severed, for God Almighty's power does not concern what is impossible.

*Agreement of al-Ghazālī's Two Statements with Bacon's Teaching*¹⁶³

As stated previously, al-Ghazālī states in *The Book on Trusting in God*: that God's sunnah in ordering the universe is the tying in it of causes to effects in an absolute and uninterrupted link that is not disrupted, except when the conditions through which causes materialize are not fulfilled. Hence, he states that cause follows effect when there is no obstacle: "it is inevitable." He explains the like of the Almighty's statement, "Thou wilt not find for Allah's way of treatment any substitute, nor wilt thou find for Allah's way of treatment aught of power to change" [35:43], in terms of this ordering of the uninterrupted linkage of causes and effects. This is the correct interpretation.

In [68] the book *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* he states: this linkage between common causes and effects is not, in spite of its continuity, logically necessary. Its absence is not impossible. It is only constant in daily experience and, in fact, through the wisdom of the universe's Creator and Arranger. If God, in His wisdom, decreed links between the universe's events, then people would need to search for them and be guided by them in their affairs and interests. For this to provide guidance would not depend on the logical impossibility of something's severing from everything ordinarily appearing to be its cause.

One who contemplates [the teachings of] the early philosophers recognizes that they depended on theoretical evidence in order to determine something's logical impossibility, possibility, or necessity. Al-Ghazālī and other Imams of scholastic theology explained that what is meant by a "logical impossibility" is the agreement of two opposites, their mutual elimination, or the agreement of two contrasts, which means two opposites. They state: God Almighty's power does not concern what, in view of reason, is impossible and necessary imperative. Rather, God Almighty's power only concerns what is possible. Thus, the application of the scholastic theologians' opinion concerns two important matters, which are the basis of human progress. The first is that which is proven to be imperative (necessary) or impossible is not desired by the desirer – neither in terms of acquisition, nor in terms of reliance upon God Almighty – because it does not change. The second is that things that are possible obey regular rules that it befits a person to discover and benefit from. However, it is not befitting that he bring to a stop the development of his preparation upon the appearance of the initial perception that it does not change. Rather, it is incumbent upon him to search, that perhaps he may find another divine sunnah, the sunnah whose continuity appears to him conditioned by it. Then he may combine together the two sunnahs' benefits. An example of that is the apparent divine sunnah concerning the fire that burns that which is susceptible to burning. It is not desirable that the individual assert that the prevention of burning is impossible because burning is necessary. Rather, it is incumbent upon him to investigate, because burning is possible [but not necessary]. Perhaps its occurrence is conditional upon the absence of one of the substances that, were they known, would prevent burning. Indeed, that which generally prevents burning has been discovered and is now used to protect public offices.

Thus, with this determination *Hujjat al-Islām* refuted those speculative philosophers doctrinally (although Ibn Rushd misunderstood some of what he said and contested some of it) and demonstrated the Islamic religion's ruling in liberating the human mind from those speculative bonds, such that it swim in God's kingdom, rightly guided by God's ways [69] therein. Bacon adopted this proposition. Hence, he determined that

speculative evidence cannot be relied upon to prove scientific matters unless it is supported by experience and experimentation. Bacon stated this maxim, which they consider the basis of the new scientific arising in Europe, while before him it was known to the Muslims (as mentioned previously in [Imam 'Abduh's] articles on *Islam and Christianity*). It would have been clearer and more apparent to him had he not believed in things contradicting it, such as sorcery, alchemy, and the philosophers' stone, which are imaginary matters not reaching the level of a considered hypothesis. However, Europe was prepared – in order to advance science – to adopt that which he stated on the need to depend on experience and experimentation. Hence, they acted upon it and science advanced thereby. Bacon is considered the Imam of this path, which the Muslims determined and implemented before him.

The upshot is that *al-Jāmi'ah's* editor is wrong in [the following] claims: that Imam al-Ghazālī denied causes, that al-Ghazālī's teaching on divine sunnah contradicts that which we have stated – and persist in maintaining – in *al-Manār*, that between it and Bacon's maxim stands a high fence, and that if the inseparability of causes and effects or laws was not necessary (that is, a logical imperative whose nonexistence is impossible), positive law would degenerate into chaos. If He were wise, the Creator of the universe and Author of its laws would not proceed with anything except in accordance with an ordered system, as His mighty book demonstrates and as existence demonstrates. Thus, whence chaos? Who would state that the universe's ordered system is contingent upon God Almighty being incapable and unwise? This is not stated by anyone except the Christian *al-Jāmi'ah's* editor, [who does so] to prove that the Muslim scholastic theologian's teaching is inherently false and leads to the denial of God Almighty's wisdom and omnipotence. Among those who reject the religion and attack Islam and its well-known Imams, we have not seen anyone more incoherent in his attacks than the like of this "honorable" writer, who sought fame and success without following their [true] path, as did the imbecile who defecated on that great church's altar to bring fame to his name. Shameful is the fame gained by disdaining the truth and corrupting the Imams' words for a few coins that flow from an

enemy of Islam. He desires to vent his anger on its people, even with fallacious discourse. Yet Islam is above being hobbled by delusions.

Article Fifteen: Response to al-Jāmi'ah's Denial that Islam is the Religion of Reason

[70] We have been explaining, and continue to explain, that the religion of Islam is the religion of reason. Our proof is the Book, the sunnah and the Imams' words. However, we were tested by those who planted doubts about the religion among the Muslims and among those who call to it, by deluding them: that that which we state is not of the religion and harms it, since it is incumbent upon Islam to become reason's enemy, like other traditional religions; that basing it on reason would foreshadow its destruction, as the other religion was destroyed; and that were it rational, it would be a science, not a religion. In addition, other doubts were planted. But we take our religion from the rational, transmitted evidence in our Lord's Book, not from the disputers who plant doubts.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

hā' mīm

The revelation of the Scripture is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.

Lo! in the heavens and the earth are portents for believers.

And in your creation, and all the beasts that He scattereth in the earth, are portents for a folk whose faith is sure.¹⁶⁴

And the difference of night and day and the provision that Allah sendeth down from the sky and thereby quickeneth the earth after her death, and the ordering of the winds, are portents for people who have sense [45:1–5].

Woe unto each sinful liar!

Who heareth the revelations of Allah recited unto him, and then continueth in pride as though he heard them not. Give him tidings of a painful doom [45:7–8].

This is the book of God. It furnishes evidences and rational proofs through which it demands certainty in faith from people of reason.

Certainty is but by rational proof, while knowledge of something obtained through its proof is the highest and surest knowledge. Hence, after the verses mentioning the People of the Book, the Almighty states, "And now have We set thee (O Muḥammad) on a clear road of (Our) commandment; so follow it, and follow not the whims of those who know not" [45:18]. This is followed by "This is a clear indication (*baṣā'ir*) for mankind, and a guidance and a mercy for a folk whose faith is certain" [45:20].¹⁶⁵ *Baṣā'ir* is the plural of *baṣīrah* (sure knowledge), which is proof leading to certainty.¹⁶⁶ He then states of the deniers, imitating them: "And they say: There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save time;¹⁶⁷ when they have no knowledge whatsoever of (all) that; they do but guess" [45:24]. Thus, He denies that they have knowledge, making clear that supposition is of no benefit in religion, as that sought in it is the knowledge of certainty, as He states [71] in "The Star" (*Sūrat al-Najm*): "And they have no knowledge thereof. They follow but a guess, and lo! A guess can never take the place of the truth" [53:28].

Those short verses demonstrate that Islam is the religion of reason, that it is a science, and that certainty is sought through it. They demonstrate that supposition does not suffice for faith in its fundamental principles (*uṣūl*). These include God Almighty's oneness, knowledge, omnipotence, sending of prophets, and the mission of the seal of the prophets, prayer and peace be upon him and upon them. Verily, the verb "to reason" occurs approximately fifty times in the Qur'an, which also mentions reason and "those who have reason in speech." The signs of faith are [also] established without the root '-Q-L, as, for example, in the words "mind" and "intellect." The word "intellects" occurs in ten to twenty verses. Thus, knowledge of the universe is the way of faith and Islam. Him to whom glory and power belong states:

Hast thou not seen that Allah causeth water to fall from the sky, and We produce therewith fruit of divers hues; and among the hills are streaks white and red, of divers hues, and (others) raven-black; And of men and beasts and cattle, in like manner, divers hues? The erudite among His bondmen fear Allah alone. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Forgiving [35:27–28].

Thus our religion, and God be praised, is knowledge, while all of our knowledge is religion, as it increases our faith and knowledge of God, be He glorified. In the hadith is related, "This knowledge is religion, so examine the one from whom you take your religion."¹⁶⁸ As for the statement of those who plant doubts declaring that knowledge is limited to things that are perceived: in the philosophers' opinion all that you perceive is not said to be known [with certainty], as it may be a case of deception or ignorance. No science safeguards certainty as does the science of mathematics, and its proofs are rational, not perceived.

Contradictions between Rational Evidence and Transmitted Evidence

We have mentioned more than once in *al-Manār* that that which Sunni Muslims and others whose Islam is untrustworthy agree upon is that if there is related in the apparent revealed law that which contradicts clear-cut rational evidence, then acting in accordance with the rational evidence is the imposed duty. For transmitted texts, we have the science of allegorical interpretation or delegation.¹⁶⁹ This matter is discussed in the

books on doctrine studied at al-Azhar and other Islamic schools in all areas. Take *al-Jawharah*'s statement:¹⁷⁰

[72] Every text instills the delusion of anthropomorphism. Interpret it allegorically or by delegation and seek dissociation.

Interpreting God Almighty's statement, "Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope" [2:286], Imam al-Rāzī states of its allegorical interpretation:

Verily, it has been established that when a contradiction occurs between the rationally determined and the apparent and transmitted, either both are believed, which is impossible, as it entails combining two opposites, or the rationally determined is deemed false and the apparent and received preferred. That would necessitate resorting to contesting rational evidence, and when it is thus, divine oneness, prophecy, and the Qur'an are deemed false. Giving preference to the transmitted evidence would necessitate degrading rational evidence and received evidence simultaneously. Thus, it remains only to affirm the veracity of the rational evidence and correlate the transmitted evidence with it through allegorical interpretation.

Then, in this manner, he furnishes the evidence against the Mu'tazilah concerning the issue of God's commandment, they agree with the Sunnis about it.

This issue is well known to the Muslim ulama and there is no need for us to confirm it with reports. However, at this time the publications of those who plant doubts about the religion are widespread among us. If a Muslim reports an expression among his religion's fundamental principles, they state that it is from him. It is not far-fetched that among the

non-literal truth is resolved by "delegating" or "deferring" the matter to God, hence *tafwīd*, which in this context is synonymous with *taslīm* ("handing over"). This principle is stressed on numerous occasions by both Ridā and 'Abduh in their *tafsīr*. For example, in explanation of the ambiguous verses, 'Abduh comments, "I follow the path of the *salaf* concerning necessity of *taslīm* and *tafwīd* concerning that which relates to God Almighty, His attributes, and the unseen." Ridā affirms his mentor's sentiment (*Tafsīr*, i, 252).

ignorant there be those misled by their words. It was mentioned previously—in [Imam 'Abduh's] articles on *Islam and Christianity*—that Islam's second fundamental is the priority of reason over a report in the event of a contradiction. The proof of this is taken from the Qur'an and from some of the Imams' teachings. Had we desired to present in detail the reports pertaining to opinions and meanings, and the rest of the books of scholastic theology and exegesis, and those of the modern thinkers—such as *Ḥawāshī al-Bājūrī*¹⁷¹ and *al-Risālah al-Ḥamīdiyyah*¹⁷²—we would have greatly extended the discourse in the same vein.

Doubts about the Issue

Were it said: after demonstrating the philosophers' incoherence in their theoretical evidence for knowledge of God Almighty, Imam al-Ghazālī stated:

Hence, no party among them is free from shame as regards [Ibn Sīnā's] doctrine. That is what God does with those who stray from His path, thinking that the inner nature of divine matters is grasped by their reflection and imagination.¹⁷³

Would this statement demonstrate that the religion is irrational or not?

[73] The answer: understanding the Creator's (*al-Khāliq*) essence and true nature, and the essence and true nature of the Creator's (*al-Bārī*) attributes, is not among the requirements of religion, nor among those of philosophy. If the wise and the ulama are unable to comprehend the essence of observed forms, how can those who aspire to knowledge of the essence of the observed forms' Creator through theoretical evidence and poetic fancy? This is something with which the religion does not burden us. Al-Ghazālī's statement in his critique of the philosophers

demonstrates that Islam does not burden the people with the irrational, as the planter of doubts claims.

Similar is his statement in *The Investigation into Divine Knowledge* (*Baḥṭh al-ʿIlm al-Ilāhī*), addressing the philosophers after demonstrating their incapacity and incoherence [Sixth Discussion: On the divine attributes]:

What is intended is to show your impotence in your claim of knowing the true nature of things through conclusive demonstrations, and to shed doubt on your claims. Once your impotence becomes manifest, then [one must point out] that there are among the people those who hold that the realities of divine matters are not attained through rational reflection – indeed, that it is not within human power to know them. For this reason, the giver of the law has said: “Think on God’s creation and do not think on God’s essence.”¹⁷⁴

This statement from al-Ghazālī, then, like the previous statement, is made specifically to demonstrate the human incapacity to know the true nature of the Creator (*al-Bārī*) and the true nature of His attributes. Indeed, centuries and epochs have passed and other centuries and epochs will pass, until the end of the human age, and humans [will] not attain knowledge of the true nature of God and the true nature of His knowledge and other attributes. The same point is made by [Imam ʿAbduh], author of the articles *Islam and Christianity between Science and Civilization*. He states (*al-Manār*, p. 544.):

It is necessary that the matter of the world winds up with the fraternization of knowledge and religion, in accordance with the sunnah of the Qur’an and the Wise Remainder [an epithet of the Qur’an: 3:58] and that human beings adhere to the meaning of the sound hadith, “Think on God’s creation and do not think on God’s essence.” Thereupon, God completed His religion, although the unbelievers be hateful and followed by those inflexible and despairing.

The statements of Imam al-Ghazālī and this Imam are one. There is no difference between them. Had Islam imposed upon us that we comprehend the nature (*kunh*) of God Almighty’s essence (*dhāt*), and the essence

of His attributes, it would have been imposing upon us that which cannot be conceived or attained. But God states, “Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its scope” [2:286].

[74] We might add to this that in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* – the book from which we cited these two statements – Imam al-Ghazālī did not intend to explain the Islamic principles. He only intended to explain the weakness of the philosophers’ speculations on matters of the divine – and verily, the false is eliminated by the false. Hence, he states in the lines preceding the second statement (p. 45.):

[39] We did not plunge into this book in the manner of those who introduce [what is constructive], but in the manner of those who are destroyers and objectors. For this reason we have named the book *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, not *The Introduction to the Truth*.¹⁷⁵

Thus, it is unsound to derive his teaching on doctrine or anything else from this book, as we highlighted in the article on causes and effects (Article Fourteen). Rather, his teaching [should] be derived from his books on doctrine and fundamental principle. Therein he concurs with the rest of Sunni Imams that reason is the fundamental basis of Islam and that its clear-cut proofs cannot be opposed. Thus, if, in its apparent meaning, that related in the revealed law contradicts these proofs, the ruling is that stated above.

Were it said: verily, we know that the Muslim Imams of doctrine and fundamental principle were not in disagreement as to Islam being the religion of reason, would you [thereby] know that the Islamic philosophers departed from this principle, separating reason and religion?

The answer: “indeed no.” The philosophers were more desirous of reconciling reason and the revealed law than others. The philosopher of Islam in the West, Abū al-Walid ibn Rushd, God Almighty have mercy upon him, composed a book on this issue, affirming therein that which the Sunnis had previously affirmed. That book is entitled *The Book of the Decisive Treatise Determining the Connection Between the Law and Wisdom*

(*Faṣl al-Maqāl fīmā bayn al-Sharī'ah wa al-Hikmah min al-Ittiṣāl*). In this book, he affirms that the revealed Islamic law mandates rational reflection and makes reason the basis of doctrine. He then states (p. 8.):

[*Demonstrative truth and scriptural truth cannot conflict*]

Now since this religion is true and summons to the study which leads to knowledge of the Truth, we the Muslim community know definitely that demonstrative study does not lead to [conclusions] conflicting with what Scripture has given us; for truth does not oppose truth but accords with it and bears witness to it.

[*If the apparent meaning of Scripture conflicts with demonstrative conclusions it must be interpreted allegorically, i.e., metaphorically.*]

This being so, whenever demonstrative study leads to any manner of knowledge about any being, that being (*dhālik al-mawjūd*) is inevitably either unmentioned or mentioned in Scripture. If it is unmentioned there is no contradiction, and it is in the same case [75] as an act whose category is unmentioned, so that the lawyer has to infer it by reasoning from Scripture. If Scripture speaks about it, the apparent meaning of the words inevitably either accords or conflicts with the conclusions of demonstration about it. If this [apparent meaning] accords there is no argument. If it conflicts there is a call for allegorical interpretation of it. The meaning of "allegorical interpretation" is: extension of the significance of an expression from real to metaphorical significance, without forsaking therein the standard metaphorical practices of Arabic, such as calling a thing the name of something resembling it or a cause or consequence or accompaniment of it, or other things such as are enumerated in accounts of the kinds of metaphorical speech.

[*If the lawyer can do this, the religious thinker certainly can. Indeed these allegorical interpretations always receive confirmation from the apparent meaning of other passages of Scripture.*]

Now if the lawyer does this in many decisions of religious law, with how much more right is it done by the possessor of demonstrative knowledge! For the lawyer has at his disposition only reasoning based on opinion, while he who would know [God] [has at his disposition] reasoning based

on certainty. So we affirm definitely that whenever the conclusion of a demonstration is in conflict with the apparent meaning of Scripture, that apparent meaning admits of allegorical interpretation according to the rules for such interpretation in Arabic. This proposition is questioned by no Muslim and doubted by no believer. But its certainty is increased for those who have had close dealings with this idea and put it to the test, and made it their aim to reconcile the assertions of intellect and tradition. Indeed we must say that whenever a statement in Scripture conflicts in its apparent meaning with a conclusion of demonstration, if Scripture is considered carefully, and the rest of its contents searched page by page, there will invariably be found among the expressions of Scripture something which in its apparent meaning bears witness to that allegorical interpretation or comes close to bearing witness.

[*All Muslims accept the principle of allegorical interpretation; they only disagree about the extent of its application.*]

In the light of this idea the Muslims are unanimous in holding that it is not obligatory either to take all the expressions of Scripture in their apparent meaning or to extend them all from their apparent meaning by allegorical interpretation.¹⁷⁶

This is the substance of it.

You say: God is most great, the truth shines and glitters. It is apparent that the Muslim scholars – the theologians, philosophers, exegetes and jurists – do not differ on Islam being the religion of reason and its law being based on reason, and addressing reason (not the heart alone). It is apparent that that which the Master Imam [ʿAbduh] states in the articles entitled *Islam and Christianity between Science and Civilization* on the contradiction between the rational and reported evidence is that agreed upon in the pure community. It is this to which *al-Manār* has been loudly calling. It grew too great for Islam's enemies. Hence, they deceived with great deception. Yet they will find no helpers beside God.¹⁷⁷

[76] Were it said: In *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, Ibn Rushd has another discussion that appears to contradict his statement here. Take for example his statement:

Philosophy investigates everything related in the revealed law. If it comprehends it, the two comprehensions are equivalent, which is the most complete knowledge. If it does not comprehend it, it indicates the deficiency of human reason, the law alone comprehending it.

And his statement:

The ancient philosophers did not discuss the problem of miracles, since according to them such things must not be examined and questioned; for they are the principles of the religions, and the man who inquires into them and doubts them merits punishment, like the man who examines the other general religious principles, such as whether God exists or blessedness or the virtues. For the existence of all these cannot be doubted, and the mode of their existence is something divine which human apprehension cannot attain. The reason for this is that these are the principles of the acts through which man becomes virtuous, and that one can only attain knowledge after the attainment of virtue.¹⁷⁸ One must not investigate the principles which cause virtue before the attainment of virtue, and since the theoretical sciences can only be perfected through assumptions and axioms which the learner¹⁷⁹ accepts in the first place, this must still more be the case with the practical sciences.¹⁸⁰

The answer: this discussion does not negate that discussion, nor does it contradict it. Rather, it supports the first statement and the statements of all the Muslim Imams before and after him, up to [Imam 'Abduh], author of the articles entitled *Islam and Christianity between Science and Civilization*. Were we to hypothesize a contradiction between the two

statements, then the viewpoint of the first would be the obligatory precept, as it definitively explains his teaching and belief, his and that of other Muslims. As for his statement here, it is a report about the early philosophers. Their opposition to us does not harm us, so long as we are confident that we are on the path of the truth confirmed by logical proof. Yet Ibn Rushd states here that the early philosophers do not oppose us in these issues, that is to say, that was a requirement of their school. Else, he explains that they had no discourse on the issues that he mentions. Thus, the dispute between him and al-Ghazālī on this occasion is limited to the reporting of the philosophers' disputing the matter of miracles [77] and virtues' foundations with the sects. Al-Ghazālī attributes it to them in general, while Ibn Rushd states that there was no investigation into that except for that of Ibn Sīnā. And the matter is straightforward.

As for the harmony, you see him in the beginning discussing the philosophers' view of the religions and their bases, not Islam, which is the most elevated of them. And together with that, he acknowledges matters that do not place the ultimate religion above reason, meaning that there be in it something that reason deems impossible and devoid of soundness. Among them:

[1] That which philosophy does not comprehend through theoretical speculation demonstrates that human reason is incapable of independently attaining it. Hence, it stands in need of the revealed law's guidance with regard to it. There is no doubt that, to this day, human reason is incapable of comprehending all that is before it. It uses and benefits from electricity, while it does not positively comprehend its true nature. In that case, how can it positively comprehend matters of the afterlife or resurrection? Our statement that the religion of Islam is rational does not mean that all of its issues may be comprehended by way of independent reason. Rather, it means that there is nothing therein that reason declares impossible, such as three being one, one being three, and God being united with a man. Were this not the intention, reason would independently set down the religion, with no need for revelation.

[2] His opinion that the religion's bases, such as miracles, are existing matters whose existence is beyond doubt. That which exists cannot be

impossible, as an impossibility cannot exist. His statement about them – that the mode of their existence is a divine matter beyond the reach of human understanding – does not mandate the religion's irrationality or its incorporation of something rationally impossible. This is because our reason is incapable of comprehending the mode of the generation of these existing things, which we perceive and do not doubt. Hence, all the more reason for human reason's incapacity to comprehend the mode of the existence of miracles. It is easy for every rational individual to distinguish that which is impossible, and whose existence is inconceivable, from that whose existence is beyond doubt, even though comprehension of the mode of this existing thing's origination is not attained.

[3] These established existing religious foundations are to be adopted through accepting and following the revealed law (not the opinions of people), without empowering philosophical theory to investigate their feasibility and the mode of their existence. This is because such investigation is foolish and harmful. And what foolishness [78] and harm is greater than planting doubts through valueless speculation about an existing thing that benefits people in order to dissuade them from benefiting from it? What foolishness is greater than the foolishness of one who disputes that established to exist through observation or successive testimony (such as miracles), or demands of the individual that he not follow the virtuous path until he investigates its feasibility and the mode of its actualization with speculative intellectual evidence, while he sees and perceives that [virtues] are obtained through action, and that the way to obtaining them is action, not intellectual speculations?

How excellent is that which the philosopher [Ibn Rushd] also related on this issue (p. 129):

As to the objection which Ghazali ascribes to the philosophers over the miracle of Abraham, such things are only asserted by heretical Muslims. The learned among the philosophers do not permit discussion or disputation about the principles of religion, and he who does such a thing needs, according to them, a severe lesson. For whereas every science has its principles, and every student of this science must concede its principles and may not interfere with them by denying them, this is still more

obligatory in the practical science of religion, for to walk on the path of religious virtues is necessary for man's existence, according to them, not in so far as he is man, but in so far as he has knowledge; and therefore it is necessary for every man to concede the principles of religion and invest with authority the man who lays them down. The denial and discussion of these principles denies human existence, and therefore heretics must be killed. Of religious principles it must be said that they are divine things which surpass human understanding, but must be acknowledged although their causes are unknown.

Therefore, we do not find that any of the ancient philosophers discusses miracles, although they were known and had appeared all over the world, for they are the principles on which religion is based and religion is the principle of the virtues; nor did they discuss any of the things which are said to happen after death. For if a man grows up according to religious virtues he becomes absolutely virtuous, and if time and felicity are granted to him, so that he becomes one of the deeply learned thinkers and it happens that he can explain one of the principles of religion, it is enjoined upon him that he should not divulge the explanation, and should say "all these are the terms of religion and the wise," conforming himself to the Divine Words, "but those who are deeply versed in knowledge say we believe in it, it is all from our Lord" [3:5]. These are the limits of the law and the limits imposed upon the scholars.¹⁸¹

[79] Truly I say: this is that which may be correctly attributed to those who are wise and rational. We illustrate it with another example that we often mentioned in our discussion with the Ikhwān. This is that medicine is a science whose benefits have been proven to people through experience and observation. Hence, it would be a stupid and foolish notion to say to someone who is ill: it is incumbent upon you not to accept the doctor's treatment before you first investigate the principles of medicine and prove

with theoretical evidence that it is beneficial and useful, so that you would then know [the answers to the following]: What is the cure prescribed for you by the doctor? How are its parts related to each other? How is it effective in fighting the disease? What is the rational evidence for its effectiveness? And such things.

Likewise, it is a foolish notion to say to the people: before believing in the proven miracle that you have perceived – or that was transmitted to you broadly and without interruption – it is incumbent upon you to investigate its causes, until it be as though you were in its presence [perceiving] how God Almighty created it. Then, you should also investigate everything related in the revealed law, so that through theoretical evidence you learn [answers to the following]: Why is it as it is? How was it? After all of that, if you understood all the issues in terms of theoretical evidence, believe. If you did not understand them, disbelieve.

The sick person is extirpated through the sickness of the body, until he becomes disordered in mind or is dying and unable to comprehend the details of medicine through reflection and investigation. And that is entirely acquired. Reflection and experience produced examples of its operation among the people. Likewise, vices and false doctrines extirpate the soul, rendering it its own affliction and the people's affliction. And the soul does not reach these states through reflection. Thus, it remains that that which is correct is that which Islam has determined: namely, reflection is enjoined concerning the fundamental principles (*uṣūl*) through which knowledge of God Almighty and the veracity of prophethood are established. When we believe in God's omnipotence, will, and knowledge, and believe that He bestowed revelation upon some of his servants and inspired them to guide the people to that which brings them happiness in their lives after death, then it is easy for us to utterly accept all that those to whom revelation is revealed say (the prophets, peace be upon them). If we find therein something whose apparent meaning contradicts rational clear-cut evidence, we reconcile it with the rational clear-cut evidence through allegorical interpretation, or we entrust the matter to God, together with accepting the rational evidence. This is that upon which the Muslim Imams are in consensus, as stated previously. That suffices in

regard to [80] Islam's character as the religion of reason, as Muslims do not neglect clear-cut rational evidence under any circumstance.

Ibn Rushd was eloquent in his opinion that allegorical interpretations apparent to those firmly rooted in knowledge are not to be widely distributed. Rather, they are to remain specifically for their [specialist] people. Thus, they do not become a cause for the common folk to open the door to disputation of that which they did not understand among the universal sciences' truths. Disputation is the cause of doubt. Thus, it is enjoined to educate the doubters, while ignoring the disputatious.

The Development of Religions and their Culmination in Islam

Quoted from *The Theology of Unity*, by the Master Imam [ʿAbduh]

When religions first began, men understood their well-being, whether general or particular, only in a most rudimentary way, rather like infants lately born, who know only what comes within their senses and distinguish only with difficulty between the present and the past. Only what they can manually touch do they really cognize, and they have no inner awareness by which to "sympathize" with family or fellow, being concerned simply with self-preservation and too pre-occupied for the implications of their relationships with others, unless it be a hand to feed them or to steady them on their feet. Religions in that sort of context could not intelligibly relate themselves to men on subtle aspects of consciousness or "extend" them with rational proofs. On the contrary, the great grace of God is seen in their handling the peoples as children, in just the way that a parent treats his child – with the utmost simplicity and within the senses of hearing and sight. Though the meaning and purpose were there to be known, obedience was irrespective of actual comprehension and intelligent knowledge. Religions came with astonishing and impressive miracles [81] and laid upon men the forms of worship consonant with their condition.¹⁸²

(*Al-Manār*: until now, that which has been known among these religions is that of the Jews. It will be clear to one who reads their holy books – that collectively they call “The Torah” – that the description of them therein is appropriate. This includes the Lord calling the Israelite people “the thick necked,” meaning broad necked, indicating brutish stupidity. He demonstrated miracles and horrors to them, and the Israelites were humbled. Then, they returned to their rebellion. He explained the precepts to them through special occurrences, such as their deliverance from the Egyptians. He punished them with the strongest of punishments for relinquishing any ruling, such that, for example, whoever works on the Sabbath be killed.)

During the centuries that followed peoples flourished and declined, waxed and waned. They quarreled and agreed. The times brought sufferings and there were endless vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity, through which they were prompted to finer sensitivity and deeper self-awareness, which may not unworthily be compared to what goes on in women’s hearts or belongs with growing youth. A religion came which spoke to these feelings and, tenderly confiding to these compassions, made its appeal to the gentle arts of the heart. It laid down for men sacred laws of asceticism, drawing them away from the world altogether and turning them towards the higher life. It taught men not to press even their undoubted rights and barred the doors of heaven to the rich. Similar attitudes characterizing it are well enough known. It ordained patterns of Divine worship consistent with its understanding of man and in line with its message, and had a deep effect in breaking the ills and retrieving the evils of the souls that hearkened to it. But in the course of a few generations the resolve of men grew weak and wary of it. Men lapsed from its provisions and precepts as being more than they could sustain. They took to assuming that there was an inherent impracticability in its commands. Its very custodians themselves began to rival kings for their authority and to vie in wealth with the idle rich. The great mass of people declined sadly from its noble quality through “reinterpretation” and in their wan fancies imported all kinds of false accretions. So things went, in respect of actions and disposition. Purity was forgotten and integrity bartered. As for dogmas, these were compromised by schism and heresy. [82] The custodians

abandoned all its principles, except one they mistakenly supposed to be its strongest pillar and chief ground, namely the veto on intellectual inquiry into the faith, or indeed into the details of the universe and on the pursuit of secret things of the mind. They promulgated the principle that reason and religion had nothing in common, but that rather religion was the inveterate enemy of science. It was not simply that this view could be taken by anyone for himself: rather they strenuously imposed it as the proper thing for all. They pressed the doctrine with such force as to provoke the most shameful of all conflicts in human history, namely civil war within the household of religion for the imposition of religious decrees. And thus the very foundations were broken up and communal relationships destroyed. Concord, cooperation and peace were ousted: schism, contention and strife reigned in their place. And so men continued until the advent of Islam.¹⁸³

(*Al-Manār*: The reader observes that the master attributes all that was innovated in Christianity, and was an evil upon humanity, to the leaders who forsook Christ’s asceticism – while claiming that they were his deputies – for vying with the kings and seeking to be better than them. So let no one imagine that Muslims believe that in Christ’s religion itself there is something that, in its essence, is harmful to the one addressed by it.)

At length, human society reached a point at which man came to his full stature, helped by the moral of the earlier vicissitudes. Islam supervened, to present its case to reason, to call on mind (*fahm*) and intelligence (*lubb*) for action, to take emotion and feeling into partnership for man’s guidance to both earthly and heavenly blessedness. It clarified the things that provoked human discords and demonstrated that religion with God was one in all generations, that there was a single Divine purpose for their reform without and their cleansing within. Islam taught that the sole aim of outward forms of worship was to renew the inward recollection (*dhikrā*) of God and that God looks not on the form but on the heart. It required the devotee to care as well for his body as for the soul, enjoining outward as well as inward integrity, both of which it made mandatory. Sincerity was made the very heart of worship and [83] rites were only laid

down in so far as they conduced to the hallowing of moral character. "Verily prayer preserves men from foul and evil things." (Surah 29.45.) "Man is created restless. When evil befalls him he despairs, but touched with good fortune he becomes niggardly – though not those who pray." (Surah 79.19–22.) The rich man who remembers to be grateful is raised by Islam to the same level as the poor man who endures patiently. Perhaps Islam even esteems him higher. Islam dealt with man in its exhortations as a wise and sober counselor would deal with a mature person summoning him to the full harnessing of his powers, both outward and inward, and affirmed this quite unequivocally to be the way of pleasing God and showing thankfulness for His grace. This world is the seed plot of the world to come. Men will not come by ultimate good save as they endeavor a present well-doing.¹⁸⁴

Then he states:

Islam dispelled the clouds of illusion which obscured from the mind the realities of the macrocosm of this world and the microcosm of man. It affirmed that the great signs of God in the making of the world hinge on Divine laws, laid down in the eternal knowledge of God and ever abiding unchanged. Yet God's part in them must never be overlooked. On the contrary, the remembrance of Him must be alive in every act of cognizance we make. In the Prophet's words: "The sun and the moon are signs of God: they do not suffer eclipse of any one's death, nor for his birth. If you see an eclipse let it remind you of God and wait for the re-appearance of the light."¹⁸⁵

(*Al-Manār*: The sun was eclipsed on the day of the death of Abraham, son of the Prophet, prayer and peace be upon him. Some of the people thought it was eclipsed due to his death – hence the prophet's statement, which was related by al-Bukhārī and others.)¹⁸⁶

This confirms that all earthly phenomena follow one pattern, within the age-long care of God for the laws on which He established the universe. Islam also drew back the curtain that obscured the conditions of human well being, whether of persons or peoples, and of the trials with which men are beset. It made the issue unmistakably clear in both respects.¹⁸⁷

After discussing the condition of individuals and [stating] that that which afflicts them occurs by dint of their own deeds and other than that, the master states:

It was not this way, however, in respect of nations. There is a spirit from which the life of nations takes its rise, illuminating their true well-being in this world here and now, before the other world is reached. It is the spirit God has implanted in His Divine laws for the right ordering of thought and reflection, the discipline of desire and the curbing of ambition and luck. [84] It is the spirit which bids us assess every question on its proper merits and pursue all objectives soundly, keeping faith, holding brotherly affection and co-operating in right dealing, with mutual loyalty through thick and thin. "He who wishes his reward in the world, We will give him thereof." (Surah 3.145.) God will never deprive a nation of His favor as long as this spirit animates them. Rather He will multiply their blessings in proportion to its strength and diminish them when it is weak. Should the spirit no longer be found in the nation, happiness also takes its leave and peace with it. God then turns its strength into decline and its wealth to poverty. Well-being then gives way to wretchedness and peace to trouble. While they slumber in neglect, they will be overpowered by others, either by tyrants or by just masters. "If We desire to bring a nation to destruction, We first warn those of them who live in comfort. But if they go on in sin, they bring down upon themselves a righteous judgment and We utterly destroy them." (Surah 17.16.) God has commanded righteousness, but they have perverted it to evil. In that event, wailing and

account of the death of anyone or on account of the birth of anyone. So when you see them (in a state of eclipse), supplicate Allah and observe the Prayer till it is over.' " Among the nine collections, it is found in those of al-Bukhārī (Friday Prayer, 985, 1000; Etiquette, 5731), Muslim (Eclipse, 1522) and Ibn Ḥanbal (in several places).

weeping will bring them no help at all, nor will intercession, nor the surviving appearances of activity. Their only hope of staying the rot is to repair again to that gracious spirit and seek its renewed descent from the heaven of mercy upon their affairs, through the promptings of thought and recollection, of patience and thanksgiving. "Truly God does not change a people's condition until inwardly they change themselves." (Surah 13.11.) "This was the pattern of God's relationship to those who passed away before you: you will never find the way of God to vary." (Surah 33.62.) There is no finer word than that spoken by 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib when he prayed for rain: "O God, there is no distress that comes upon us without our having transgressed: and none is lifted off us save by repentance."

The earliest of the Islamic peoples lived by these laws. While the Muslim spirit was exalted by these noble beliefs and worked them out in worthy actions, other peoples supposed that by their prayers they could shake the earth and rend the heavens with their lamentations, while they wallowed in their passions and persisted in their extravagant ways, so that their idle hopes of intercession profited them nothing.¹⁸⁸

This is the substance of *The Theology of Unity*.

The Similarity of Religious Education and Education in Schools

This is that stated by the master in *The Theology of Unity*, originally published in 1315 A.H. [1897]. The al-Azhar board of administration decided to teach it officially at al-Azhar Mosque, and it is known that the chairman of this board is the shaykh of the mosque. He is among the other ulama on the board. Moreover, the rest of the [85] al-Azhar ulama agree with that which is in this book. And the meaning of the religion of Islam's nature as the religion of reason may be discerned from the above statement from it. The Qur'an testifies to this in scores and hundreds of verses. It is also known that Muslims believe in the true nature of the Christian religion, and its character in bringing reform to the people, but for a limited period that passed when it was dispensed with by means of the last religion.

It was stated previously that God's religion is one – "We make no distinction between any of His Messengers" [2:285] – and that the revelation's message differed in accordance with the people's readiness to receive it. Hence, the Mosaic law, and that resembling it prior to it, was studied in the manner of primary school [studies]. The Christian religion resembles secondary school, while the Islamic religion resembles the highest school, which is the final education. This does not imply a diminution of Judaism and Christianity, as the existence of high schools does not diminish primary and secondary school, as both are necessary for it. The goal of all is one. Do not forget that the similarity relates to humanity in general. It is not said that it is necessary for each individual to become a Jew, then a Christian and then a Muslim. This is what we stated in support of that which sound knowledge guides towards concerning the laws of human development. The people adopted that through the rulings of those laws. Thus, millions of Jews and Christians converted to Islam in groups. In that, they were as one who moves from a school to a higher one. Had not it not been for the [Muslim] leaders who rendered the religion tradition-bound and erected a fence of sensory and illusory power around it, and had it not been for the incidents that befell Islam's path through the intercession of the leaders among the kings and emirs and their enticement of the ulama and jurists, the early religions would not have been left with the body of followers with which they founded large nations. (p. 807. *et cetera* vol. 5.)

Article Sixteen: Civil and Religious Authority – In Response to al-Jāmi'ah's Denial of Civil Authority and the Shari'ah in Islam

[86] We Muslims believe:

- That God Almighty's religion is one in essence.
- That the explanations and guidance it contains differ only in accordance with the [conditions of] the ages.
- That people in every age take from religion's guidance that which accords with the capacity of their readiness.
- That the social conditions of the preceding nations led to the loss of

their religion's scriptures, completely or partially, when a long period passed after those who brought them.

- That the religious communities appearing closest to Islam were not safeguarded from this loss.
- That Islam is the only religion whose scripture was preserved in its entirety.
- That Islam appeared during a time in which the social conditions had improved to such a point that we can determine that none of the mind's gains vanished after it, nor will vanish, as it is the beginning of a new era in human history.

We stated: the religious communities closest to Islam in time were not safeguarded from loss. It is clear that we mean Judaism and Christianity, as each of these factions lost the uninterrupted transmitted support for its holy books. This no longer exists verbally or in written form. This is the object of the Almighty's characterization of them as "those unto whom a portion of the Scripture hath been given" [3:23; 4:44; 4:51] and His statement – to Him belongs glory and power – "they forgot a part (*ḥaẓẓ*) of that whereof they were admonished" [5:13; 5:14]. "Part" means "portion" (*naṣīb*), namely, meaning that they preserved part of that which they were given and forgot part. When part of the religion is lost, the remainder becomes untrustworthy, even if it were safeguarded from corruption and addition. How much more so, then, if it were not safeguarded? Verily, God Almighty sent down the Qur'an "confirming whatever Scripture was before it, and [as] a controller (*muḥaymin*) over it" [5:48].¹⁸⁹ The word "Scripture" is used here in the generic sense, while the "controller" is the "watcher" (*murāqib*) that has information about that which it is watching over. Thus, that which the Qur'an verifies of those scriptures is of the portion they were given, while that which it reports and is not present therein is of the part they forgot, and that which it declares false is of [the part] that they added and augmented. And the Qur'an is the just judge: "Lo! this (Qur'an) is a conclusive word, It is no pleasantry" [86:13–14].

[87] The enjoined duty is that they appoint it as arbitrator in that which unfolds, refrain from that which it forbids, and implement that which it commands. Those who conform acted thus, while the others blocked the path to it. The cause of blocking is religious authority, whose holders, serving their own interests, rendered the religion purely traditionalist, its doctrines tethered to the hands of leaders, such as monks and bishops, who force them upon the people, while forbidding them other doctrines, and raise minors, male and female, to believe in the necessity of accepting and deferring to them in every matter of religion. The effect of such an upbringing remains apparent in one raised in the schools of the priests. Hence, you find him debating you on the matter. If your proof is brought against him, he would state: this that you say is clear and rational in itself. But it concerns the matter of religion and the priest states the opposite. No statement may be made on religion but that of the priest, and it is not required that his statement be rational or comprehensible!

Hence, if a Christian states: religious authority is the agitator of reprehensible fanaticism, the birthplace of hatred and enmity between neighbors and friends, the obstacle preventing equality of rights between people of the same nationality, the shackles through which will and power are suppressed and the fetters through which reason and thought are restrained, the Muslim would agree to it and not dispute it. He would agree to it thanking God Almighty that his own religion lacks a faction to whom Islam granted the right of controlling minds and spirits, setting down for them what it wills and forbidding them what it wills and dealing with the Muslims – in the name of religion – as it wills.

Then, he would turn around and see that those Muslims who imitated the spiritual leaders of the Christians did not reach the point of attaining a truly regular authority through which they could hold thought accountable for its inclinations and minds accountable for their knowledge. Rather, these were those who permitted along with thought and imagination that which those other than them did not permit. They considered every piece of knowledge an approach to God Almighty, because they state: for to God the paths number the breaths in creation.

Then, he would turn and look from another angle. He would see that the authority of these imitators in spiritual authority is not great but when religious knowledge is diminished, their influence was not strong but when Islamic rule's influence is attenuated. Their authority did not grow in an area but that it was a disaster for the Muslims and for Islam. If you have forgotten the events surrounding the Mahdī of Sudan, you have in front of you the incident of the rebels of Marakesh.

[88] It is the right of the scholars, rational individuals, writers and speakers to state what they wish of Christian spiritual authority. They have the right to separate and distance it from civil authority as much as they are able to, because it is an authority that was and is harmful, wherever it existed and exists, most of its harm occurring in the days when it was joined to civil authority. They have the right to call it "authority," because in every kingdom it has a general leader who appoints the rest of the leaders in the kingdom. These leaders – who are the pillars of the general leader's authority – are dispersed in each city and village, whereas not all villages and farms have civil leaders, as they have these spiritual leaders. They have the right to wrestle with and oppose this government. They have the right to curb its power and weaken its tyranny. They have the right to say that were it not separated from civil authority, we would not have smelled the breath of freedom. They have the right to excuse the French nation, since it attempted to uproot this authority entirely. The Muslim excuses them in all of this, as it is the practice that Islam brought, as we stated at the beginning of this article. Thus, whoever did not derive it from Islam directly may derive it from the order of innate disposition, should knowledge guide him toward it. Islam is nothing but the religion of innate disposition, the guide to its order and God's laws for it.

It would be a clear wrongdoing to blame Islam itself for the establishment of religious authority as it is known to the Christians. It is Islam that invalidated every authority that would enable a faction to become a sovereign over another faction's spirit and a controller of its freedom in anything beyond that which the revealed law sanctions for every leader and follower. Those who followed the laws of those who preceded them and imitated them in matters such as this did not imitate well. The spirit of

Islam prevented them from affecting it in all that they desired. But Islam was not safe from enemies who attributed all of their faults to it, and knowingly lied about it. Yes, they fabricated falsity against it, because they read what we and certain Imams wrote in explanation of the denial of this authority. Thereafter, they did not desist from finding fault with Islam in relation to it. Behind planting doubts in Muslim minds about their own religion and estranging them from it, they have a goal at which they aim. We referred to it in a previous article¹⁹⁰ and we promised to explain the truth about it, as we explained other matters among their doubts and criticisms.

A Testimony on the Subject from al-Manār's First Year

[89] In issue 22 of *al-Manār's* first year, we published an article on "The Spiritual Authority of the Sheikhdom of the Spiritual Path,"¹⁹¹ stating at the beginning:

In the development of his society, man passed through stages. Periods and ages passed over him, while he was restrained in will and shackled in senses by two great strong powers whose possessors had complete influence and free disposition over individuals. These powers are those of religion and politics or, as named by the people of this age, spiritual and temporal power.¹⁹²

Then, after discussing the condition of these two powers, their influence, and the condition of the nation governed by them, we stated:

In general, a nation in this condition is always agitated, like the rider's arrow that neither rests firmly nor is stable. All that befalls nations in the way of development and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and unhappiness, may be attributed to the free disposition of emirs, rulers, and spiritual leaders. Evil befell nations more than good, and misery was more prevalent than happiness, because the just and wise ruler

is not immune from stumbling. If he stumbles, the nation stumbles with him, and falls. Verily, the erring ignorant ruler destroys in a short period what the wise built over long periods.

For this reason, the attainment or completion of people's happiness is dependent upon the establishment of positive codes and revealed laws, spiritual and temporal (i.e. civil), and the rendering of the people [living] under them as equals (namely, with no distinctions among them), the leader having no privileges over the follower beyond that which distinguishes some followers over others and that without which there could be no leadership, such as the necessity of obeying the ruler. And no one is required to obey anyone in that which exceeds the shari'ah and positive law. However, no heavenly shari'ah was brought and no positive human code was instituted with this specification and [establishment] of equality until the coming of the Islamic religion. It established the two laws (civil and spiritual) simultaneously, rendering people equals, making no distinction between one individual and another, except in terms of knowledge and practice. It pulled out [90] the roots of blind obedience. It demonstrated that the call to truth is but through proof and logical demonstration, in the manner of the Almighty's statement, "Say: This is my Way: I call on Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever followeth me" [12:108] – the ulama explain that "sure knowledge" is clear proof – and the Almighty's statement, "Say: Bring your proof (of what ye state) if ye are truthful" [2:105].

Based upon this, the Companions would consult the Prophet, God's blessing and peace be upon him, about an opinion saying, "Is this your own, O messenger of God, or was it revealed as revelation?" If he said, "It is my own," they would offer their own opinion. Perhaps the prophet would defer to their opinion, as happened in some of the [early Muslim] battles (such as Badr and Uhud). The Commander of the Faithful 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb halted Imam 'Alī and a Jewish man to interrogate them. 'Alī scolded 'Umar after the interrogation, as he had not been equal in his treatment of him and his opponent, because he addressed him with his surname, while addressing his opponent with his common name. Addressing someone with his surname is a form of exaltation, and exalting someone over his opponent – even in such a manner as this – violates the principles of justice and equality. And a woman challenged 'Umar on

the issue of withholding of the dowry when he was on the pulpit, arguing against him with the verse: "and ye have given unto one of them a sum of money (however great), take nothing from it" [4:20].¹⁹³ So he said, "A woman was correct and 'Umar was incorrect."

More telling than this is that in order to straighten the line [of soldiers] on the day of Badr, the prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, poked Sawād ibn Ghizyah in the stomach with a *qidh* (an arrow without feathers or blade) while he was uncovered. So he said, "You have hurt me, allow me then to retaliate." So he exposed his stomach for him that he return like for like. Then he began hugging him, that plea having been made in order to receive that great honor. Before his death, the prophet permitted whoever among the people to whom he owed a debt to demand it from him, and that retaliation be taken upon him if the debt be the like of hitting. And when a man claimed that the Prophet had once hit him, he granted him permission to hit him. The man said, "I was naked of the shoulder or back" (the narration is unclear). So he removed the garment from his noble shoulder for the man, who responded as did Sawād ibn Ghizyah.

The upshot is that Islam established worship of God alone, freedom within the framework of the shari'ah, equality among people in rights and obligations, and liberation of will and thought from every [91] communal headman's authority and every spiritual leader's control. Accordingly, the Muslim is completely God's slave, completely free in relation to anything other than Him.¹⁹⁴

This is some of that which we stated on the issue approximately five years ago. It was followed by a discussion of the authority of the sheikhdом of the spiritual path, how it appeared and what followed.

Summary of the Evidence for Denying Religious Authority in Islam

(1) The strongest evidence that there is no religious authority in Islam as there is in Christianity is the establishment of the messenger's role in the

Qur'an as that of a conveyer (*muballigh*), rather than a controller, steward, or enforcer over the people. The Almighty states, "Thine is only to convey (the message)" [42:49]. Him to whom glory and power belong states, "The guiding of them is not thy duty (O Muḥammad), but Allah guideth whom He will" [2:272]. He whose nature is blessed states, "Lo! thou (O Muḥammad) guidest not whom thou lovest, but Allah guideth whom He will" [28:56]. He whose name is mighty states, "and thou (O Muḥammad) art in no wise a compeller over them" [50:45]. He whose strength is Almighty states "Remind them, for thou art but a remembrancer, Thou art not at all a warder over them" [88:21–22]. He whose splendor is sublime states, "nor art thou responsible for them" [6:107; 39:41]. How can this be compared to a religious community whose leaders claim they are God's agents on earth? Can an opposite be compared to an opposite?

(2) The prophet's conduct, prayer and peace be upon him: you heard previously that he checked himself, drawing back from his own opinion and deferring to that of his Companions. More remarkable than this is that he deferred to the opinion of consensus over his own opinion in the matter of the captives of Badr, when the latter was the more correct. Hence, God harshly scolded him until he cried, prayer and peace be upon him.

(3) The rightly-guided caliphs' conduct – as you heard previously of 'Umar and applying in the same manner to the rest of them: their conduct in implementing the principle of equality and appointing the ummah as arbitrator over themselves was not derived from their individual merits. Rather, this was something that they derived from the Qur'an and the prophet's conduct, as you learned. Their merit was only that they understood Islam in its entirety and were more rigorous than others in jealously guarding it and acting in accordance with it.

(4) [92] Had Islam legislated or permitted this authority which is known in the religious communities that preceded it, including the Buddhists, [Hindu] brahmins, Israelites, and Christians, then a system of regulations and leaders for it would have existed among the Muslims, as there were for other religious communities. However, nothing of this nature existed. There only existed a party that took upon itself the task of pedagogy and providing guidance. Then, it became divided into parties and groups that

lacked authority over any individual, being followed only by those who wished to do so of their own volition. With that, those of this party were not immune from the jurists' accusation that they had deviated from the religion and sundered the rulers' unity. Hence, they did not appear except where knowledge of the religion and its legislation was weak, as we stated previously. As for the title "Shaykh al-Islam," it is among the inventions of the kings and emirs who were far removed from religious bearing. Hence, they enlisted one who had such a bearing, thereby to influence the souls of the common traditionalist folk.¹⁹⁵

Yes, religious authority existed in its true form among the Bāṭiniyyah. Furthermore, this party had a civil government in the form of the 'Abīdiyyūn (the Fāṭimids). However, Bāṭinī teaching was not Islamic in any way and therefore the 'Abīdiyyūn were not able to endorse it openly.¹⁹⁶

So, it is said that religious and civil authority were combined in a party that had a general affiliation with Islam. But then it is known from that stated above that there is no religious authority in Islam. So what is this with which certain Christian writers disfigure Islam? What is this "advice" that those pens direct towards the Islamic ummah, in order to convince it of the need to separate religious and civil authority in Islam? The answer: the intention is that the Muslims relinquish their shari'ah, as will be seen in the forthcoming section.

The Shari'ah and the Religion in Islam

The custom of the European writers and those in the East who follow them, especially the Christian writers, is to apply the word "religion" to that which pertains to belief in God and revelation, and that which revelation promises and communicates concerning matters of the unseen and ordains for worship. They apply the word "shari'ah" to that which pertains to worldly transactions and judicial, civil, and political rulings. Yet, among these writers, every scholar of history [93] perceives that Islam brought a religion *and* a shari'ah. For example, some of them state that Muḥammad, prayer and peace be upon him, founded a nation in twenty years, bringing to it a religion and a shari'ah, while no one in the world but he was destined to combine the three. So these writers perceive that the shari'ah is the religion's partner in Islam, and that that which a Muslim believes of his Lord and that which determines how a Muslim treats the people is all acquired from one light, the light of the revelation that God revealed to Muḥammad, prayer and peace be upon him.

In Islam, there is no distinction between the purely religious and the legal except on one point: that for belief and worship – as they do not dif-

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fer as times, places, and nations' conditions differ – reliance on revelation is mandatory concerning the general and particular aspects, the major and the minor. As for worldly transactions, since these differ in accordance with the above-mentioned differences, Islam established general rules and universal principles for them. It authorized in those in authority – who are familiar with Islam's aims, universal principles, and general rules – to derive rulings for particular exigencies that develop. Upon consulting the people about all that affected their welfare, they announced the rulings, deriving them from those principles and rules. The Almighty states, "O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority" [4:59]. Thus, He mentions "those who have authority" in the plural form. And He states, "if they had referred it to the messenger and such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it" [4:83]. Here also, God mentions "those who have authority" in the plural form, entrusting them with the responsibility of deriving rulings that are needed, or concerning which there is disputation.

Furthermore, legal rulings, textual or derived, require executors, and it is essential that they have a leader, so that matters not become chaotic. After the death of the prophet, the first leader in Islam was called his caliph, and the one following him was called "commander of the faithful," the use of this title continuing thereafter. This leader's role is to protect the religion and its people, and enforce its legal rulings. Thus, he is not a controller over the people in their religion or an independent agent in setting down legal rulings for them. He is only a guardian of order and an executor of rulings. As you observe, this power of his is civil and consultative, not absolute and tyrannical. However, Islam obligates him to act in accordance with the shari'ah, and forbids him from [94] legislating his own [laws]. It obligates obeying him in that which is morally right, as it obligates the ummah to remove his power should he compel it to contravene the law. In view of this consideration, it may be correctly stated that civil authority in Islam derives from the religion, or that civil authority *is* religious authority. But it would be incorrect to compare it to religious authority as it is known to non-Muslims, or to represent its guardian as a

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combiner of two forms of authority, the one over spirits and minds, the other over bodies and actions.

This is our religion and this is its authority. What, then, does that Christian writer demand of us and what is his advice to us? He demands of us that we make our civil leader a legislator and an executor of the statutes that he legislates for us. He advises us to relinquish our shari'ah, which is based upon the fundamental principles of our religion. He claims that it was building the shari'ah on the foundations of the religion and making rulers the religion's protectors and enforcers which destroyed the 'Abbasid state and sundered the Islamic ummah's unity. It is also his opinion that Muslims will neither succeed nor have a [strong] base so long as their ruler is required to act by and enforce their religious shari'ah!

Were you to gather together all the words in all languages that mean astonishment, and add to that all the signs of astonishment, and indications of it among gestures and signals, bodily and written, and were you able to portray all the emotions and psychological affectations of those who are astonished, and attach all of that to this Christian advice to the Islamic ummah, you would not have sufficed for providing for those who wonder the true explanation of its wondrous, strange, and astonishing nature.

The Doubts of the Instiller of Doubts

(1) This faithful advisor or instiller of doubts about the religion states: the religion's goal on earth contradicts the government's goal on earth. How, then, can Islam combine the two opposites?

We say to him: Islam came to bring reform on earth, and all that opposes reform is corruption whose elimination is enjoined. Hence, it is mandatory that the Islamic government's goal conform to the Islamic religion's goal. Among that upon which there is no disagreement among Islam's jurists is that all of its shari'ah's rulings are erected upon the foundation of "averting evil and enjoining the good." So, which of our rulers could [95] bring us a revealed law superior to this revealed law if, following your advice, we relinquished it and made the ruler the legislator?

(2) The faithful adviser or instiller of doubts about the religion states: among the contradictions between the religion's role and the

government's role is that the religion established foundations and unquestioned conventions for reason, and paths for the pursuance of thought. Thus, it restricted intellectual freedom. The government does not require an individual to follow a designated path in his thought. Rather, it is the guarantor of individual freedom and what follows in the way of money, blood, and honor.

We say: if your religion is thus, the religion of Islam contradicts that without contradicting the governmental role that you have mentioned. That is, intellectual freedom was stipulated in Islam, and a Muslim does not dissent from Islam's ruling in his beliefs (as we explained in the previous part). And it was stipulated that Islam's rulings are derived from five foundations that they call "the five general principles." The author of *Aqīdat al-Jawharah* combined these principles in his statement:

The preservation of religion, then, is through [preserving] the individual, property [and] relationships.

Likewise, [preserving] the mind and honor is enjoined.

(3) The faithful advisor or instiller of doubts about the religion states: it is enjoined that the government treat those it governs equally, even if their religions differ, and also grant them equal protection. In that, the religion contradicts it.

We say: if your religion is thus, our religion contradicts your religion, not in terms of that which is enjoined upon the government. That is, equality is among our religion's fundamental principles. In the previous section of this article, we referred to 'Umar's equal treatment of Imam 'Alī and a Jewish man, and 'Alī's demand that 'Umar be equal in the form of address also. This equality was not attained by a government, nor will be attained by a government, except when it raises Islam to its true form. As for providing protection, among the principles transmitted in our religion is this beautiful statement: "That we protect them with that with which we protect ourselves," and this more excellent statement: "Their rights are our rights, and their obligations are our obligations."

(4) The faithful advisor or instiller of doubts about the religion states: it is not of the nature of religious authority to enter into worldly

affairs, as religions were legislated to prepare the afterlife, not to prepare earthly life.

We say: if your religion is thus, our religion is not, as it was legislated [96] to explain the benefits of both worlds, and provide guidance to the paths of happiness in both. How, then, can you decree for all religions, without exception, that which you believe in your religion? Were you yourself the creator of all religions, such that you would say: indeed I also created the religion of Islam thus. Its people added to it, so I now demand them to return to the original form? Muslims would not accept that from you, because their Imams defined the religion as a divine creation that leads those possessing minds, minds which are sound in the choices they make, to that wherein is their righteousness in the present and their prosperity in the afterlife.

(5) The faithful advisor or instiller of doubts about the religion states: combining the two forms of authority continuously weakens the ummah, as it mandates the suppression of reason and intelligence, exposes the government to the revolution of the ummah through inciting an enemy that agitates the ummah against it, causes religious strife between the groups making up the nation, and exposes the religion to political lies and their chicaneries.

We say: all of this indeed occurred in his religion, and hence we do not deny it. We only contest analogizing about our religion – which differs from his religion – upon that. It suffices us that what befell us was the opposite of what befell them, because the Islamic government – which he calls a combination of the two forms of authority (while you understand its meaning) – gave the ummah a power not matched by any during its time. And the Islamic ummah did not grow weak but through the weakening and non-establishment of the revealed law. This is a matter concerning which there is no dispute. Likewise, reason and intelligence were not suppressed in Islam during the age when the Islamic shari'ah was established. The likeness of such suppression only occurred after the revealed law was weakened and there was laxity in its enforcement. As for the revolutions – of which the advisor is afraid – against Islamic governments if they remain under their shari'ah, these are more liable to

occur if governments depart from the shari'ah, because in Islam rebellion against the ruler is not permissible except when he departs from Islam by forsaking the shari'ah. If he errs, it is enjoined for the ummah to turn him away from his error without coercion. The author of *Aqīdat al-Jawharah* states:

Enjoined is appointing an Imam just.

In the revealed law, know that it is not the mind's rule.

As that is not a pillar believed in the religion.

Thus, do not deviate from his clear ruling.

Save unbelief, and then renounce his oath.

As God alone protects us from his harm.

[97] As for religious schism among sects and religious communities, this was not known in the Islamic lands during the days when the shari'ah was upheld and applied. Rather, the sects were in harmony and peace, because the religion enjoined that, and it was acted upon. That which mandates schism is the rendering of the religion as an interest of particular leaders, each leader and his faction opposing other factions. And that clings more to the two authorities' separation – each being made independent and having leaders for its control – than to their combination, especially the Islamic combination, as defined above. The Christian nation tasted the illness of this form of leadership, and it was it that developed the innovation of warfare between two factions from a single religion's people over a disagreement about religion. Had there not been particular leaders for each faction, nothing of this nature would have occurred. Christianity's contagion infected other religions, and the sparks of this fire afflicted the Muslims. Hence, schism occurred among the adherents of the legal schools, through each faction siding with a special Imam and particular ulama. You learnt that the religious class among the Muslims did not have a superintending role, because Islam's very nature prohibits that. For this reason, factionalism and schism was not great among the masters of the Islamic legal schools, as among the lords of the Christian schools. However, the multiplicity of schools in the religion contradicts the religion's purpose, as it causes division therein. God states, "Establish the

religion and do not be divided therein" [42:13]. He states, "Lo! As for those who sunder their religion and become schismatics, no concern at all hast thou with them" [6:159]. But in this age there comes to us from among the Christian writers one stating about us that factionalism is of the very nature of our religion, and that there is no remedy for this factionalism except our rulers' relinquishment of our shari'ah!

As for the religion being exposed to political lies and their chicaneries if the shari'ah is derived from the religion, this is the opposite of reasonable and contradictory to reality, because, as the writer acknowledges, politics is based upon hypocrisy and deceit. And there is no treatment for hypocrisy except the religion. Indeed, Islam was harsh upon it, to the point of calling it "the lesser association."¹⁹⁷ Hence, when politics is built upon the foundation of religion, it is sound and with it the religion is sound. When politics is separated from religion, it is ruined and it ruins the religion. For this reason, Imam [Abduh], author of the articles entitled *Islam and Christianity*, sought refuge from it with that which he sought refuge, and depicted it with that which he depicted. Verily, the advisor or instiller of doubts inverted the truth, for he made the government's separation from the religion the cause of well-being!

Religious and National Unity

[98] The faithful advisor or instiller of doubts about the religion states: the religious unity sought by Islam is impossible to attain, and striving for it was the greatest cause of the trials that befell Islam and Christianity. He claims that humanity has progressed from seeking religious unity – which had been widespread among them – to national unity. He slipped in his explanation by mentioning France, in which this new unity developed, this new unity that circumscribed human prosperity to such an extent that France eliminated the monastic orders' schools and forbade her leader from mentioning God Almighty's name or the divine care in his speeches. Here, he sensed that through this slipping he was falling into the abyss of falsehood. Hence, he reverted to opposing this "new path" and mentioning

its corruptions. Thus is the nature of one who excessively praises that which he does not understand. He infers the impossibility of religious unity from what occurred in Europe in the way of corruptions and trials because of it, the Pope's lack of success with regard to it, and Europe's custom thereafter of erecting a fence between the Pope and legal rulings. Then, he continues in his practice of comparing Islam to Christianity, claiming that that which ruined the 'Abbasids' state was their incapacity to preserve the kingdom through religious unity, and their failure to be rightly guided to national unity! God be praised! How knowledgeable of history is this writer, and how capable of deducing the characteristics of the religious communities from it!

Tell us, O historians and readers of the books of history: which historian states that the cause of the 'Abbasids' downfall was their rule through the Islamic shari'ah, or states that the members of the different religious communities in their countries were rebelling against rule by the shari'ah, and demanding its replacement with other laws set down by rulers or those ruled, and that hence they rebelled against the state until they overthrew it through civil wars, whose stimulant was religious fanaticisms? No one, knowledgeable or ignorant, states that. It is only a claim asserted, fabricated, contrived and invented by the Muslims' faithful advisor, or the one who encourages them to doubt the religion.

Among the causes of the 'Abbasid state's downfall, the two most important are mentioned by the Ottoman state's greatest historian, Jūdat Bāshā Nāzīr al-'Adliyyah (God Almighty have mercy upon him). After mentioning [99] al-Ma'mūn's¹⁹⁸ virtue in promoting the sciences and broadening the scope of civilization, he states (in Arabic translation):

But he made a clear error in a matter pertaining to the kingdom's organization. Namely, he gave the governorship of Khurāsān to a man named Ṭāhir as a reward for killing his brother al-Amīn. Ṭāhir made Nīsābūr its capital and rendered it an inheritance for himself and his descendants

after him. That was the stimulant for the removal of fear of the caliphate from the governors' breasts, and it was the cause of rebellion and the longing for independence. Al-Ma'mūn was succeeded by the caliph al-Mu'taṣim. He gathered together some of the Turkish minors and made them his designated army. And when they grew powerful, they rebelled against him and waged long rebellions, as happened anciently in the armies of the Caesars of Rome.

It is clear that al-Ma'mūn's action contradicts the Islamic shari'ah and is incompatible with religious unity, and that al-Mu'taṣim's action violated the fundamental principles of Islamic rule, such as consultation, the ummah making itself responsible for the Imam, and that care be taken when courtiers are enlisted. The Almighty states, "O ye who believe! Take not for intimates others than your own fold, who would spare no pains to ruin you; they love to hamper you" [3:118]. The exegetes offer two explanations of His statement "others than your own fold." It is said that it refers to the hypocrites, and it is said it refers to the unbelievers. Those minors belonged to one of those two groups, as they were taken as courtiers while faith had not yet entered their hearts, as may be learned from the articles *Islam and Christianity*. Indeed, that which the Almighty stated of them – "who would spare no pains to ruin you; they love to hamper you" [3:118] – came to pass. But our faithful advisor misconstrues the Imam's statement on this issue as relating to political strife. He claims that Imam 'Abduh's intention is to adjudge the Islam of the Turks and Persians unworthy of consideration, and to adjudge the religion as specifically for the Arabs. This is to say that Imam 'Abduh adjudged the Islam of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Ḥanīfah, and al-Ghazālī unworthy of consideration! We seek refuge in God; we seek refuge in God.

O, what a shame for the Islamic shari'ah's enemies. They sought a defect in it. This tired them and rendered them destitute. So then they sought a defect in the shari'ah's enforcers (such as Abū Bakr and 'Umar). This tired them and rendered them destitute. So then they searched for a defect in those who strayed from the shari'ah's straight path and deviated. And thus, they found a defect and achieved their purpose by attaching it to the shari'ah. They stated that it is the shari'ah which harms

people, mandating its relinquishment and the invention of another shari'ah to replace it!

[100] The bond of unity in human society was [originally] limited to houses (families). Thereafter, it widened to tribes. Then, in accordance with the law of development, it widened. Hence, there were peoples and great communities that were united by nationality through language, religion, or place (homeland). Religion was distinctive. Until the appearance of Islam, it did not reach beyond its people, for in the gospels – adopted by the Christians until this day – Christ, prayer and peace be upon him, states, "I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" [Mt 15:24]. And he states, "I did not come to abolish the Law, rather I came to complete it."¹⁹⁹ The "Law" is the law revealed specifically for the Israelites. Its completion is effected through explaining the truth about that which they disputed therein, explaining its secrets, and broadening its spiritual dimension. As for their report about him stating, "Spread the gospel in all of creation," it apparently contradicts that stated above. It is possible that it might be harmonized with it by attaching the definite article to the word "creation" to indicate the well known, that is, "the well-known creation," which is the Israelite nation, wherever it is and where it was.

In accordance with the law of development, humanity was ready after this for a unity wider than all that mentioned above, for a unity into which all peoples, tribes, nations, and nationalities of different places, languages, and religions could enter, for a unity of two bonds. The first bond is corporeal, social, civil, and this-worldly. This is that they rule by a just shari'ah that equalizes their rights, such that there be no advantage for old over young, rich over poor, Arab over non-Arab, or believer in one religion over believer in another. The second bond is spiritual, brotherly, and other-worldly. It distinguishes those united by true belief based on clear demonstration. The Islamic religion brought this unity, and in the early period Muslims acted upon it. Hence, those who differed from them in religion preferred Muslim rule over the rule of those from their own religion, linguistic group, and homeland. And until the present day there has been

no equality or true justice except in Islam. These European countries developing through nationalism do not treat their own citizens and those of their colonies equally in legal rulings. Rather, they compelled weak governments to depart from the principles of justice and equality and privilege [European] citizens over the subjects of every government [101]. Thus, an Egyptian would be executed if he killed a foreigner in Egypt, but a foreigner would not be executed for killing an Egyptian. We clearly explained this topic in an article entitled "Nationality and the Islamic Religion" – see *al-Manār* volume two.²⁰⁰ Numerous investigations in other volumes of *al-Manār* confirm these various matters, and support the numerous theses [advanced] in this article.

Thus, it is clear from the sum of that stated above that the unity brought by Islam is the highest that humanity regards, and the most excellent that it turns toward. But two barriers prevent humanity from benefiting from it. These are spiritual leadership in the Christian religion – which rendered the religion an interest among the interests benefiting the leaders – and the departure of rulers affiliated with Islam from this unity's foundations. Freedom will level these two barriers, and through Islam humanity will combine the two forms of prosperity. (p. 859. vol. 5.)